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BAPTISM

THE COVENANT AND THE FAMILY.

BY

REV. PHILIPPE WOLFF,

LATE OF GENEVA, SWITZERLAND.

Translated freely from the French by the Author,

WITH SOME ADDITIONS.

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P R E F A C E .

BAPTIST principles have never found a congenial soil in France and Switzerland, and were discarded by the martyr Huguenots. Of late, however, they have met with considerable favor among the Evangelical Christians of these countries, many of whom have adopted them in theory, although very few as yet have carried them out in practice. The Baptist doctrine has there had all the advantage of being a plausible novelty, and of meeting minds unprepared and untrained to oppose it. Moreover, French Protestantism suffers very much from the evils resulting from State Churchism and its concomitant, mere nominal Christianity. To many serious and influential Christians the Baptist principle appears the great remedy for these evils, inasmuch as it seems to promote individual profession. But they generally ignore the most repulsive features of the practice of Baptists, and will scarcely credit the rigidity of their sectarian discipline nor the scenes usually attendant upon immersion.

The author of this book has thought it his duty to give a timely word of warning to his French and Swiss breth-

ren, for whom he feels the greatest interest and attachment, and to let them have the benefit of his personal experience in reference to the Baptist practice, of which he has often been an eyewitness. As will be seen, although a very decided Pedobaptist, he more than once censures some of the doctrines and arguments usually set up in the defence of infant baptism. But if he has sometimes left the beaten track and brought forward a new system of evidence, he has done it solely in the interest of truth, and for this very reason will be happy to have his views fairly criticised, and even solidly refuted, if by this more light can be thrown upon the question of Baptism. It is principally in the hope of furthering such a result, that this translation from the French has been undertaken. The manner of the author will probably appear to some as rather abrupt and sarcastic; but let any judgment be passed on the form, provided the substance be grappled with. He freely acknowledges that he did not make the futile attempt of conciliating Baptists by soft words and honeyed arguments; that, on the contrary, he has spoken out all his mind frankly, and sometimes reflected severely upon them as a whole; but even while doing this, he has carefully abstained from all personality. He knows that he can never obtain forgiveness for writing such a book from that class of people to whom their peculiar views are like another Gospel, the truth of which is neither to be questioned nor investigated. But this he knew before he took the pen, and made up his mind long since to bear

quietly any amount of abuse for the sake of the cause. From this there can be no escape, for the honest Spurgeon himself, in a recent letter, after lamenting the dangerous tendencies evinced by all the Baptist organs of Great Britain, adds: "Abuse, misrepresentation, slander, await any man who shall thrust his arm into this hornets' nest; but it must be done, and happy will he be who shall be called to do it!"

This work has been written so as to be readable, not only by theologians and scholars, but also by intelligent laymen, and this is why so few references are made to the individual opinions and arguments of other writers. If, notwithstanding the usual aridity of the subject, it can be read without too much fatigue, and if it suggests to the reader some new points of view, either for approbation or for opposition, the highest expectation of the author will be fulfilled.

MONTREAL, July 25, 1861.

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THE BAPTISM OF WATER.

CHAPTER I.

THE TWO BAPTISMS.

§ 1. **The Starting-Point of the Question in the Gospel.** — Whenever the New Testament is opened and searched for its teachings on the doctrine of Baptism, the eye is first arrested by the third chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, where is found the earliest mention of this religious ceremony. John the Baptist is introduced on the scene as the forerunner of the Messiah, and we are told that he both preaches and baptizes. Then follows immediately a declaration on the nature and object of baptism, which is placed in the mouth of the prophet baptizer himself. It is this: “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.” (Matt. iii. 11.)

This solemn declaration may well serve us as a

starting-point in our researches on baptism, for it is the most formal which the Holy Spirit has deigned to grant us on the nature and the object of this institution, and He has placed it at the commencement of the Gospel. Further on, undoubtedly, in the New Testament, there is often mention made of baptism as of an established practice, and we glean here and there many precious instructions on its form, its symbolical sense, and its spiritual effects; but nowhere else do we find an official, positive, and complete declaration, such as that which we receive from the mouth of John the Baptist. Thus, although its extreme conciseness leaves much to be supplied, it is, notwithstanding, that which, according to the intention of the Holy Spirit, should first of all arrest our attention and direct our earliest steps in the knowledge of all that is implied by that ordinance.

§ 2. **Contrast of the Two Baptisms.**—The first glance cast upon this declaration teaches us at once and clearly that there are two baptisms,—the baptism of water and the baptism of the Holy Ghost; a very simple and fundamental division, but one which has unfortunately been too much neglected in studying Scripture on the subject of baptism. The declaration of John is immediately confirmed in the Gospel narrative, by the example

of Jesus Christ himself, who commences his ministry by the reception of a double baptism, first that of water, then afterwards that of the Holy Ghost. This fact of two baptisms, doubly and solemnly stated at the very threshold of the reading of the Gospel, should never be lost sight of in the examination of subsequent passages; for otherwise we incur the danger of raising, in reference to this institution, an edifice of doctrine upon other foundations than those which inspiration has laid, and we voluntarily condemn ourselves to error and to insolvable difficulties.

This first and introductory declaration upon the two baptisms is not only confirmed by the example of the Lord, who receives them both successively in a visible and striking manner, but still more so by his testimony, when, after his resurrection and at the moment when his disciples are about to found the Christian Church, he repeats it to them in the same terms as John the Baptist.

“For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” (Acts i. 5.)

This “*but*,” first in the mouth of John, then afterwards in that of the Lord, indicates so decided a distinction, that it is equivalent to a contrast between the two baptisms.

Finally, this first positive teaching of Scripture

upon baptism is also the last which we meet in its pages. The Apostle Peter, like John the Baptist and like the Lord, wishes that we should remember that there are two baptisms, of which one is the figure of the other, and that the second, whose nature is spiritual, is infinitely superior to the first: "The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. iii. 21.) Thus the New Testament commences and finishes its teachings upon baptism by this division, so simple and yet fundamental, of a baptism of water and a baptism of the Holy Ghost, the two explaining each other as the figure and the reality, and bound together, but with a certain contrast, as the form to the substance, the type to the thing signified.

§ 3. **Danger which there is of confounding the Two Baptisms.** — It is the baptism of water which we now propose to study. As to the baptism of the Holy Ghost, its study is that of the whole New Covenant, and of its spiritual graces; for this baptism implies the reception of the Spirit into the heart, and His whole work of regeneration and of sanctification, that is to say, the most vast and profound of subjects.

At the same time, in order not to go astray in the investigation which we are about to make, it is indispensable to apply without delay to the passages of Scripture referring to baptism the essential distinction we have just recognized, and to make use of it in order to circumscribe the choice of the Biblical materials with which the doctrine of the baptism of water can legitimately be constructed. For it is evident that if, in our Biblical examination, we do not carefully maintain this distinction of two baptisms, we cannot help falling into serious wanderings and into an inextricable confusion. If we apply to the baptism of water what is said of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, or to the latter what is declared of the former, we are no longer on the ground of truth, but on that of error. This confusion of ideas gives birth to very dangerous heresies. The baptismal regeneration which the Roman, the Greek, and unfortunately also some Protestant churches profess, has no other source than this confusion. It has been said, "The Bible teaches that baptism saves"; and this has been said with truth; but then people have failed to distinguish that, in such passages, the Bible had reference to the baptism of the Holy Ghost only, without the reception of which, indeed, none can enter the kingdom of heaven. Others, the Valentinians and the Quakers, have thrown themselves into the opposite extreme,

and have suppressed entirely the baptism of water, so as to acknowledge only the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Others, finally, the Baptists, have attempted to fix the external form of the baptism of water by applying to it declarations which evidently concern the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and ought to relate to it alone. This is what the examination of a few texts will show us.

§ 4. **Four Figures of Spiritual Baptism.** —

We give due prominence to three passages, perfectly similar, and having but one and the same spiritual meaning. All three are from the writings of the Apostle Paul; all three are addressed to brethren and saints, and speak of their intimate union with Christ as the result of their baptism, which latter is represented under the four figures: 1st, of a Burial; 2d, of a Plant; 3d, of a Garment; 4th, of a Circumcision made without hands. But let us quote these texts before commenting upon them: —

“How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are BURIED with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life; for

if we have been PLANTED together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." (Rom. vi. 2-5.)

"Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have PUT ON Christ." (Gal. iii. 26, 27.)

"In whom also, ye are circumcised with THE CIRCUMCISION MADE WITHOUT HANDS, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God." (Col. ii. 11, 12.)

Is reference made in these passages to the baptism of water, or to the baptism of the Holy Ghost? We cannot hesitate a moment in deciding that it is the latter which the Apostle has in view. Allusion is here made to a baptism which regenerates, — to a baptism which renews us spiritually, — to a baptism by virtue of which we are actually dead with Christ, united to him, raised with him; in a word, to a baptism which is not a figure, nor a sign, nor a seal, but a profound reality, as otherwise is shown by the whole context. If it referred here to a baptism of water, then the baptism of water would save. But Saint Paul himself unfolds his thought further (Rom. viii. 9, 10, 11), by saying positively that this death with Christ is the work of the Spirit,

and therefore spiritual. Much more, it is a constant work ; for we must, day by day, die with Christ, be crucified with him, buried with him, and raised with him to newness of life. There can, therefore, be no question, that reference is here made exclusively to the baptism of the Holy Ghost, for Simon the Magician and others indeed received the baptism of water from the very hands of the Apostles, and yet they were never united to Christ, were never dead with him, nor raised with him to newness of life.

The Roman Catholics and the Baptists, nevertheless, understand these passages as relating to the baptism of water, and regard this interpretation as essential to their doctrine. The first, and with them the Puseyites and some other exaggerated Pedobaptists, because they can thus prove baptismal regeneration, the *opus operatum*, the magical influence of the sacraments. The second, because they can thus find a plausible meaning for their great ceremony of immersion which then figures burial with Christ, and to which, without the aid of these passages, they would not well know what meaning to give. But the Baptists not only base their views upon a false interpretation of the text, but also are here distinguished from Romanists by a great inconsistency, and still more by an extreme arbitrariness. The inconsistency consists in re-

jecting baptismal regeneration; for if it is the baptism of water which unites us so intimately to Christ, which applies to us the benefit of his death and of his resurrection, which, in a word, accomplishes all that the Holy Spirit can do within us, we cannot then escape the conclusion of the Romanists, that it is the baptism of water which saves. The arbitrariness consists in this, that while the Apostle depicts to us this baptism under these four figures, a burial, a plant, a garment, and a circumcision, the Baptists make use of a single one, — that which refers to their practice, — a burial, and materialize it, neglecting the two following, the plant and the garment, and utterly rejecting the fourth, which does not suit them at all, namely, circumcision. Not content with thus curtailing the Word, they adhere to only half of the figure they have singled out and materialized. For while we should be buried by baptism, not only “*with*,” but also “*into*” Christ, they profess to be only plunged *with* Christ, not *into* him, but *into* the water, which water is not Christ. Roman Catholics, with their fashion of wresting Scripture for the support of their doctrines, have never pushed further either inconsistency or arbitrariness.

§ 5. **To believe and to be baptized the two Conditions of Salvation.** — There is another pas-

sage, generally acknowledged as very difficult, upon which this distinction between two baptisms throws a strong light, and through which alone a satisfactory solution is obtained. It is these words of Mark, xvi. 16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Here then, in a doctrinal declaration of our Lord himself, are two conditions of salvation,—Faith and Baptism. First, the activity of man in believing, then afterwards the passive reception of a baptism, and after that only salvation. It has been thought possible to escape from this rigorous conclusion, by pointing out that it is added, "but he that believeth not shall be damned," without its being said that he who has not been baptized shall be damned. But this explains nothing, for if there are two steps to arrive at salvation, first faith, then baptism, it is clear of itself that he who cannot reach even the first step, faith, is not saved, or, what amounts to the same, is damned. Thus then, this negative proposition, "He that believeth not," only supports and confirms the positive "He that believeth and is baptized," as condition of the "shall be saved." Besides, the construction of the sentence is simple, and leaves no room for doubt. The grammar rigorously demands that we should consider this "believeth and is baptized" as the double condition of the "shall be saved." Let a baptism of water be seen here, and it is impos-

sible to escape from the conclusion that the latter is indispensable to salvation, and that faith without water is not sufficient to save. If, on the contrary, we recall the important distinction first made by John the Baptist, and reaffirmed afterwards by Jesus Christ and the Apostles, and recognize here the baptism of the Holy Ghost, then the passage becomes perfectly clear, and its sense is in agreement with all the other teachings of Scripture upon regeneration, which is fully implied in faith followed by the gift of the Holy Ghost: "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit." (Eph. i. 13.)

But here we shall be met with the serious objection that in the passage of Mark, xvi. 16, there can be question of no other baptism than in Matt. xxviii. 19, where Jesus Christ orders his disciples to go and baptize the nations, and where evidently reference is made to a baptism of water. We answer, that both passages, indeed, refer to the same circumstance, namely, the commission given by the Lord to his disciples to go forth and evangelize the world. But neither of the two narratives is complete by itself, for each places in the mouth of Jesus different words. Each of the two Gospels gives us but a fragment of the discourse of the Lord, and did we know no more, we should be obliged to complete these recitals one through the other, by saying

that in this discourse Jesus Christ made allusion to the two baptisms, — that Matthew relates to us what he said of the baptism of water, and Mark what he said upon that of the Holy Ghost. But, happily, here we are not reduced to a simple probability; we have in favor of our opinion Biblical certainty. The narrative of the two Gospels is further completed by the Acts of the Apostles, where we learn that in that solemn moment when Jesus, after being risen from the dead, gave his last orders to his disciples, he in fact spoke to them of two baptisms: “John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.” (Acts i. 5.)

For the rest, Romanists and Baptists alone have a doctrinal interest in finding a baptism of water in the words of Mark: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” Romanists, in order to base upon it their sacramental regeneration; the Baptists, to show that by the order of terms the baptism of water comes after saving faith. But here, as above, the Baptists are less consistent than the Romanists, since they deny that the baptism of water is essential to salvation.

§ 6. **Baptism and Baptisms.** — Now, in order to complete the separation of the passages relating to the baptism of the Holy Ghost from those referring

to a water baptism, we shall rapidly pass under review some other texts, less important in the discussion than the preceding ones, but which must first be classified to facilitate ulterior investigation.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews (vi. 2) mention is made of "the doctrine of baptisms." This plural agrees very well with our doctrine of two baptisms; but in the Epistle to the Ephesians (iv. 5) Paul declares, on the contrary, that there is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." Which is this one baptism? Even before casting the eye upon the context, the question can unhesitatingly be answered. For let it be remembered that the baptism of the Holy Ghost is infinitely superior to the baptism of water; that, as Saint Peter states it in energetic terms, the one "saves us," while the other only "puts away the filth of the flesh," and it will not be difficult to admit that when an apostle speaks of a baptism in exalted terms, but without defining, it can be only baptism *par excellence*, that which in a profound sense is emphatically baptism, the only true and effective one, since the other is only its shadow, its figure or preparation. But let us look at the context, and we shall find this point of view entirely confirmed. In reference to what does the Apostle speak here of baptism? It is (ver. 3 and 4) in order to urge the Ephesians "to keep between themselves the unity of the Spirit." To this object

he reminds them that there is for them but “one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God.” Certainly it is not the baptism of water which causes the unity of the redeemed and of the spiritual body of Christ; a glance east upon the churches and sects of Christianity sufficiently shows that it is not. Moreover, if the least doubt still remained in the mind of the reader, Saint Paul himself would dissipate it by further defining his thought in 1 Cor. xii. 13: “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” By this it is seen to be the baptism of the Spirit that makes us one body, and it is precisely the idea which Paul repeats and unfolds in the Epistle to the Ephesians. Because there are not two baptisms of the Spirit, but one baptism of the same Spirit, and one Spirit supposes one body, whilst two bodies would imply two Spirits, therefore Christians should feel their spiritual unity and remain faithful to it.

§ 7. “**The Figure that saves.**” — Finally, there is another class of passages where there is a mention of baptism made in such a manner as to confound apparently the water and the Spirit, the figure and its emblem, the sign and the thing signified. But it is evident that it is then the part of sound criticism to refer the sense of the text essentially to the most exalted baptism, that of the

Spirit, and to acknowledge that water is there mentioned only as a symbol. Here are these passages; we group them together in order that they may serve to complete and mutually explain each other:—

“But ye are WASHED in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” (1 Cor. vi. 11.)

“Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and CLEANSE it with the WASHING OF WATER by the Word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.” (Eph. v. 25, 26, 27.)

“God our Saviour has SAVED us, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, by THE WASHING OF REGENERATION and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly.” (Tit. iii. 4, 5, 6.)

To reach more promptly a conclusion, let us take hold at once of the most difficult passage, that where it is said that Jesus Christ himself has cleansed his Church with the baptism of water. Here is a very extraordinary assertion. What! the Apostle in speaking here of the invisible Church of the elect, says that it is by a baptism of water that Jesus Christ has cleansed and sanctified it! If so, baptism of

water saves. Then, what is still more surprising is, that, from the thief upon the cross, there are thousands of the elect who have died without receiving the baptism of water, and who notwithstanding have been saved, so that it must be admitted as an incontestable fact, that Christ, in spite of the passage above, has not cleansed in the baptism of water his whole Church, but only a portion, supposing that he ever baptized any one himself. We have then before us in this text a flagrant contradiction and absurdity.

Nevertheless, the solution of the difficulty is very simple ; it is that this baptism, or washing of water, is plainly spoken of as a figure ; that it has a spiritual sense ; that it is the Word of God which has operated this washing, and not the hand of men ; and this the more because Jesus Christ himself never baptized with water. (John iv. 2.)

If “ Christ has cleansed the Church with the washing of water by the Word,” or, according to the original, *in* the Word, the meaning must be that the Church was essentially cleansed or baptized by the Saviour himself, not in the water, but in the Word. The water here only completes the idea in the figure of washing, and the Church is washed in the Word as we wash in water. It is a spiritual baptism. It is absolutely the same idea which we find in the other two passages, “ washed by the Spirit,” “ saved

by the washing of regeneration," passages to which we can also add (Eph. i. 13), "sealed with the Holy Spirit," an expression which indicates the seal of a spiritual baptism.

The Baptists will be the last to contest this interpretation, since there is question here of a washing, and not of an immersion, and that they recognize the baptism of water only where there is an immersion. As to others, if there yet remains in their minds the least uncertainty on the subject of this interpretation, we would beg them to take notice of this word of Peter. "Eight persons were saved by water. The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us." (1 Pet. iii. 20, 21.) Here is certainly something much stronger for the baptism of water than the passages of Paul. It is indeed said that baptism saves, and this must be, to all appearances, a baptism of water. Yet it is by no means so; the Apostle has taken great care, on the contrary, to warn us that it is in "figure" only that the baptism of water saves. And in order to guard well against misconception here, and that it may be clearly understood that it is not the figure, but the thing figured, which saves, he is careful to add an explanation in which he lowers the baptism of water below the spiritual baptism in a manner and to a degree which has often struck us: "Baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh,

but the answer of a good conscience towards God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

§ 8. **Some Passages made clear by a double Baptism.** — The distinction between the two baptisms of water and of the Spirit casts much light on other passages where baptism is not expressly mentioned, but where doubtless allusion is made to it, such as the following: —

“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” (John iii. 5.) The water would here figure the washing of sins, and the Spirit represent interior sanctification which follows pardon.

“There are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one.” (1 John v. 8.) Here can be traced the baptism of the Holy Ghost, the baptism of water, and the Lord’s Supper. Three great facts, which indeed bear witness upon earth, in symbolical and mysterious language, for repentance, remission of sins, atonement, salvation, and sanctification; in a word, for the whole work of redemption by Christ.

This double baptism of water and of the Holy Spirit appears even to have been foretold by the prophets: “I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be cleansed; from all your filthiness

will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." (Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27.)

We do not quote these passages here to rest upon them any argument. They are not necessary to our subject, and we could have passed them over. We have preferred to show the light which a double baptism casts upon them; but without attaching, in view of the discussion, the least value to the interpretation we have suggested.

We abandon here further researches on the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which we have mentioned only to distinguish it clearly from the baptism of water, and in order to fix and circumscribe the Scriptural domain of the latter. This distinction is already a great step made in the difficult study of a doctrine controverted among the most estimable and most learned Evangelical Christians, and it will be of immense advantage, in our subsequent researches, to be able to avoid this confusion of ideas on the subject of the baptisms of water and of the Holy Ghost, which is common to both Baptists and Pedobaptists.

CHAPTER II.

THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH.

§ 9. **The Proofs drawn from the Fathers are not decisive.**—There is found in almost all the treatises on baptism a disquisition, deemed of absolute necessity, upon the testimony of the Fathers of the Church, to whom an appeal is thought indispensable, in order to know what to regard as the baptismal practice of the apostolical times. This historic portion is even in many works the principal, and often forms more than the half. By general consent two sources have thus been adopted for the study of baptism,—the Bible and the Fathers. It is necessary that, before entering upon further discussion, we should decide in reference to these sources, and that, if we admit them both, we should at least fix their respective value, and the use which it will be lawful for us to make of the Fathers. Only by thus appreciating and limiting the field of data upon baptism, shall we succeed in using in the search after truth nothing but legitimate materials. Now,

we renounce completely the use of the Fathers, and we shall not invoke their testimony in support of our doctrines on baptism. We make this act of renunciation after having sufficiently explored their writings to become convinced that the bearing of their testimony has been much exaggerated. Here are, in a few words, our reasons for setting aside the Fathers in our researches.

1st. This great importance conceded to them in works on baptism, this fashion of placing quotations from their writings side by side with those of the Bible, imply, in the mind of the reader, that Scripture is insufficient to establish the doctrine of baptism upon a sure foundation. Hence arises an uncertainty, much increased by the length and obscurity of the passages from the Fathers, and which leads many either to indifference on the subject of baptism, or to imaginary views based on human authority.

2d. It is only towards the commencement of the third century that the testimony of the Fathers on controverted points in the practice of baptism becomes clear and decisive. But it is then already too late to be able to decide with certainty through this means what must have been the practice of the Apostles. A century and a half was more than sufficient for the Church to modify considerably both the doctrine and the practice of baptism, which

at that period we find already sadly mixed up with superstition and paganism. Thus the evidence before the third century amounts to very little, is obscure and insufficient. That of the third century, itself more complete, is already too late to be conclusive, while that posterior to this period is worth still less. It is grievous, therefore, to see a recent work, written on the Baptist side, devote the smaller portion of its pages to Scriptural study, and the larger to the Fathers and their successors. Of what use is it to heap up, with great historical toil, all the follies which may have been uttered on the subject of infant baptism from Origen to Luther and Calvin, and even up to the present age? What can this prove? Would an historical work, relating all the follies uttered upon the Trinity from Origen to our days, be found very conclusive against the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus Christ? Such a work could easily be done; but when called upon to decide upon such an important doctrine, all Evangelical Christians would be unanimous in appealing only to Scripture.

3d. In fact, it is not quotations from the Fathers, but the peculiar interpretation of some passages of the Bible, which makes or unmakes Baptists. The Fathers are only brought forward by both parties in support of foregone conclusions, in order to prop up an ill-constructed system with

any accessory that will render it plausible. For ourselves, we shall not hesitate to declare that, if the practice of Christian baptism, in its essentials, cannot be sufficiently determined by the Bible alone, it had better be entirely discontinued. Far better would it be to acquiesce in regarding, with the Quakers, the baptism of water as a ceremony become impracticable, than to attempt making up for a Scriptural uncertainty by the traditions of the Fathers, and thus add to the Bible.

§ 10. **The Testimony of the Fathers would be in Favor of Pedobaptism.** — We understand very well, however, that by thus setting the Fathers aside, we are perhaps exposing ourselves to the suspicion that they are not with the Pedobaptists, and that it is the consciousness of our weakness upon this ground which renders us so far from eager to claim their assistance. It is nothing of the kind. We are convinced, on the contrary, that the testimony of the Fathers in behalf of infant baptism would crush its adversaries, and that even those patristical extracts which are most prized by the Baptists as favoring their doctrine, witness in reality against them when sifted and closely examined. Such is also the conviction of the best judge and appreciator of the historical evidence on baptism, Wall, who has been surnamed

“the historian of baptism.” This author, after having spent several years of his life in the attentive reading of the Fathers and in the gathering of their evidence on this doctrine and practice, and after having collected impartially, in two considerable volumes, all the patristical extracts which make even the most distant allusion to baptism, so as to supply both Baptists and Pedobaptists with a complete arsenal, declares that the result is entirely favorable to Pedobaptism, that the testimony of the Fathers is after all unanimous for infant baptism, inasmuch as such of them as opposed this practice did not reject it on Scriptural grounds, acknowledged its universal use in the Church, and never questioned the fact that it had been handed down from the days of the Apostles.

§ 11. **The first Baptist, Tertullian, was not one.**—Nevertheless, as we are unwilling to proceed in this discussion otherwise than in a perfectly sure and satisfactory manner, if our Baptist opponents are not satisfied with the above reasons for leaving aside the evidence of the Fathers, we are prepared to offer to them a generous concession. We shall produce the testimony of one Father, and that Father shall be the choice man of the Baptists, their best historical mainstay, the one they constantly bring forward, namely, Tertullian. We

renounce all the assistance which we could derive from the declarations exclusively pedobaptist of the Constitutions of Egypt, of Justin, Clemens, Cyprian, Gregory Nazianzen, Augustin, etc., etc., and even of Origen, the most learned and best critic amongst the Fathers of the Church. This sacrifice, which nothing forces upon us, is our own affair, and can raise no complaints on the part of Baptists, since we grant them their best patristical weapons, while we voluntarily silence our best witnesses. But we do this, well knowing that we shall force from them the avowal that their only Father, confessedly the first and only one who has opposed infant baptism during the first four centuries of the Church, is far from being one of their number; nay, that he is a dangerous friend, who requires only to be better known, that they should hasten to disown him. Let us then examine closely and in its details the doctrine of this first Baptist, who is represented to us as the champion of the purity of baptism in an age when it had long become corrupted by its general administration to infants.

Here is what he teaches: 1st. "It is an acknowledged rule that none can be saved without baptism. 2d. Those who say that we can be saved by faith, like Abraham, without having received the sacrament of water, are impious men. 3d. Before Jesus

Christ faith was sufficient to save, but is no longer so since his death, for he has bound up faith to the necessity of baptism. 4th. It is the privilege of bishops alone to baptize. 5th. But in case of danger a layman should baptize, otherwise he is guilty of the damnation of the soul. 6th. There is *advantage* (not duty) in delaying baptism *principally* in the case of little children. (*Cunctatio baptismi utilior est: præcipue tamen circa parvulos.*) 7th. He acknowledges the institution of Sponsors. 8th. It is especially in view of Sponsors that he judges the delay of baptism useful, because they are in danger of being unable to keep the engagement into which they enter in reference to the religion of the child. 9th. As to infants, the reason for deferring their baptism is that, being innocent, it is imprudent to obtain for them, through baptism, the remission of sins which they have not yet committed. (*Quid festinat innocens ætas ad remissionem peccatorum?*) 10th. Children are too young for us to risk intrusting them with this divine treasure. 11th. For the same reason, unmarried persons must be excluded from baptism, as being exposed to more temptations than others. 12th. Baptism should also be refused to widows until they are wedded again, or until they have made a vow of perpetual celibacy. 13th. Those who understand the great value of baptism will be much

more afraid to receive it than to wait. 14th. The suitable time for receiving baptism is Easter, since we must be baptized into the Lord's death. 15th. No child of pagan parents is pure, but the children of even one single Christian parent are holy by privilege of descent. (*Sanctos ex seminis prerogativa.*) 16th. The children of believers are appointed to holiness, and by that very fact to salvation. 17th. One should prepare himself for the reception of baptism by devotions, fastings, genuflections, watchings, and confessions. 18th. Before receiving the water of baptism, the candidate should profess that he renounces the Devil, his pomp, and his angels. 19th. He should dress himself in white garments. 20th. Then he must be plunged three times in the water. 21st. The efficacy of the sacrament arises from the fact, that the water of baptism itself is impregnated with the Holy Ghost. 22d. On leaving the water he must eat a mixture of milk and honey, which represents the food of Canaan. 23d. From this moment he must abstain during the whole week from bathing (in order not to remove, by profane water, the efficacy of the holy water of baptism). 24th. At the moment of baptism, the sign of the cross must be made on the forehead. 25th. After that, the candidate should never bathe without repeating the sign of the cross on his forehead. 26th. After the

water of baptism, the neophyte should be anointed with an oil poured from a horn, and prepared after the tradition of Aaron and Moses. 27th. Afterwards he must receive the laying on of hands, so that the Holy Ghost may descend upon him," etc., etc.*

§ 12. **The Baptist Practice has sprung up as a Development of Romanism.**— But let this suffice; it will be seen from the above, that the baptism of Tertullian is composed of a tissue of at least twenty-seven heresies or superstitions, not one of which his professed modern friends will indorse. His objections to infant baptism are not theirs, nor have a shadow of resemblance with them. If he delays baptism, it is because it saves, effaces all the sins of past life, and that we must wait to have a good supply of these to make it worth the while to be baptized. In a word, Tertullian is a Baptist from an excess of Romanism. He is a Baptist as the Emperor Constantine was, who, from conviction, postponed his baptism till the hour of his death, in order to insure the greatest benefit from it, by being able to live in sin till the last moment. The whole Catholic Church, by the very fact of its corruption, and from the same motives as Tertullian, was then on-

* *De Baptismo*, c. 7, 12, 13, 18, 20. *De Anima*, c. 39, 40. *De Corona Militis*, c. 1, 2, 3. *Contra Marcion*, I. 14.

the road to Baptist practice ; and the entire Church of Rome would be to-day, and long since, ultra-Baptist, as a result of the consistent development of her doctrine, had she not invented in due time additional sacraments, namely, Confirmation and Extreme Unction, in order to distribute over all ages of life the supposed virtue of baptism.

We most cheerfully abandon Tertullian to our Baptist friends. Let them draw from him all the benefit they can ; but let them at least not attempt any more to impose upon the simple and ignorant the belief that this celebrated heresiarch, this first Baptist, had in common with them a single point of their peculiar doctrine.

We leave here, with satisfaction, the Fathers, to return to Scripture.

CHAPTER III.

IMMERSION.

§ 13. **The Rite of Immersion is practised in the most corrupt Churches.** — A religious ceremony always implies an external form with an internal meaning. The form is that which first calls the attention of the spectator ; it addresses itself to his senses, and it is but later that reflection supervenes to explain the figure and impart to the rite its spiritual value. Indeed, to a great many the ceremony is exclusively a form, and their thoughts never go beyond. It is natural, therefore, that the external practice of baptism should first engross our attention. It is true that to a certain extent the form must assume its shape from the internal idea, and that it is only after the latter has been well ascertained that the former can be fully understood. But the controversy in reference to the mode of baptism rests essentially on a question of fact, which can be investigated apart from the spiritual sense. Two opinions are here in antagonism, — one, that the

baptism of water in apostolical times was an immersion; the other, that it was an affusion or sprinkling. With scarcely an exception, the Baptists have pronounced for immersion. The Greek Church sides with the Baptists, and at Moscow children are plunged in the water. The Romish Church also indorses the Baptist practice. Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventura, and others advocated it, and enforced it during the Middle Ages, until the Council of Trent decreed that baptism can be performed either by immersion or by sprinkling, the former being the practice in several dioceses, such, for instance, as that of Milan. All the Protestant churches, with the exception of Baptists, practise sprinkling. The English churches have not first suppressed the practice of immersion at the Synod of Westminster in 1643, and by the majority of one voice only, as is asserted in some Baptist works. A triple immersion had been practised in England by the Romish Church, and had afterwards been gradually abandoned by the Reformers. The synod was unanimous in behalf of sprinkling, which had become the established practice, and the vote referred merely to the more or less severe wording of an article condemnatory of immersion.

§ 14. **Immersion is deemed essential by the Baptists.**—To several of our Baptist friends in

France and Switzerland a long controversy upon immersion may appear as useless. They have often told us that they care little for the form, but much for the substance of baptism; that a little more or less water in a baptism can be of no consequence; that the choice between immersion and sprinkling is very immaterial, the essential being that baptism be not conferred upon unconscious infants, but restricted to believers alone, as prescribed by the Bible. But the Baptist principle cannot be fairly judged from its aspect in countries where it is recent; where, just born, it has not had sufficient time to develop itself, and still enjoys the innocence of its first youth. We must take it at its maturity, in England, and especially in the United States, where, entirely free for two hundred years, strong, numerous, and triumphant, it has reached its complete development and produced all its legitimate fruits, as it is infallibly bound also to do, sooner or later, in France and Switzerland. Now, wherever the Baptist principle has reached its maturity, the form prevails over the idea, and absorbs it. There is no longer any baptism but immersion. Sprinkling is held to vitiate essentially baptism, and therefore to be no baptism at all. Immersion alone buries the believer with Christ, and in this burial consists the very idea of baptism and all its efficacy. The American Baptists are unanimous in considering as

null and void the second baptism of those brethren who, baptized once in their infancy, have been baptized again on a profession of faith, but with sprinkling. The exact quantity of water specified by the Holy Ghost having been wanting, this second baptism, although that of a believer, is of no account whatever, merely through a defect in the form. So much is this the case, that Baptist missionaries from Switzerland have been driven to a third baptism in order to obtain the confidence and support of their co-religionists; and that rigid Baptists are not wanting who would exact a fourth one, because it is more Scriptural to be plunged in the river than in a font or artificial basin.

§ 15. **The Practice of Immersion cannot be altered if Apostolical.** — Let us, however, render to the Baptists their due, that they are more consistent in reference to immersion than many of the champions of Pedobaptism, who, with Neander, coolly affirm that the Apostles invariably practised immersion, but that we, their successors, are perfectly justified in doing otherwise, and then offer some sort of an apology for having substituted sprinkling. But on what ground should we presume to alter the form sanctioned by the Lord, his Apostles, and the whole primitive Church? Is it on the score of tradition? But that is Romanism. Is it because

sprinkling appears more suitable and convenient? But this is rationalism. We can accept neither of these. We intend, therefore, to show that baptism by immersion is a modern fiction borrowed from the heathen; that neither John the Baptist nor the Apostles have practised immersion; that it was unknown to them. We will go even further, at the risk of being stigmatized as rash by our friends, and we will assert that immersion is no baptism. We will not even stop until we have proved it to be an indecency, the parody of a Christian institution, if not even a blasphemy. We pledge ourselves to much. Let us open the discussion.

§ 16. **Baptize is a Greek Word, Anglicized, but not translated.** — When our Reformers, of blessed memory, undertook to translate the Bible into the common vernacular, they were stopped by the Greek word, *Baptizô*, which they did not know how to render. They were aware that this expression had more than one meaning, and that there was not any modern word, drawn from profane language, which corresponded exactly with it. Luther alone found an approach to it, in the German *Taufen*. The Reformers, it is true, and Calvin among others, inclined for immersion; but their respect for the Word of God was too great to permit them ever to make their particular views triumph through a

translation affirming what the original text does not affirm. Not able to translate this word without doing injury to the truth, and without adding to Scripture, they followed the example of the most ancient known versions, and preserved it, such as it was, making use in their translation of the words baptize and baptism, which people perfectly understood, and leaving it to the study of other passages to determine whether the form consisted in an immersion, or in something else. They used precisely the same rule with regard to the words Gospel, John the Baptist, Christ, Apostle, Church, Presbytery, Deacon, etc., which are so many Greek words carried over into the English language. Honor to those men, who, in their profound respect for inspiration, feared to add to the Book, or to take away from it anything whatever, by an arbitrary translation of an important word, the sense of which did not appear certain! Shame to those who have spurned this noble example, and who have not hesitated to insert in the very text of Scripture the private views of a party, of a small minority of Christians, while the immense majority had refrained from doing so!

§ 17. **The New Baptist Bible.** — In the country where the Baptists are most powerful and most numerous, and where their doctrine has reached its

climax, in the United States, an association, founded in 1837, under the innocent title of "American and Foreign Bible Society," has undertaken to have the Bible re-translated into all languages, in reference to a single word, and in order to make the Bible teach baptism by immersion. This Society is not the instrument of some fanatics, as might be thought, but it was the avowed organ of many thousands of Baptist churches, who regard these new versions as indispensable to the final triumph of their ideas. Just as we have had the Romish Bible, then the Socinian Bible, we have now the Baptist Bible, in which there is no longer any baptism or baptizing, but only *immersion* and *immersing*. In presence of such a fact, a cause is already decided in the opinion of all simple and impartial Christians. Previous to all investigation, will not that be thought indeed a bad cause, a questionable opinion, which cannot be propped up without altering the Bible of the Reformation and of the earliest ages of the Church!

The pretensions of the new Baptist Bible are excessive. The leading organs of the denomination do not hesitate to proclaim that their Bible is the only translation that exists, since hitherto the Bible had not really been translated, but its truth disguised under the mask of Greek words; for, if we should believe them, baptism and baptize are

not legitimately English words. They state, in an official document, the Annual Report of their Society, that all the other versions but theirs are "unfaithful"; that in them "the real meaning of words is purposely kept out of sight," and that all the other Bible Societies "have virtually combined to obscure at least a part of Divine Revelation." They have thus produced a new English Bible, which they give out as the only pure Word of God, but from which they have taken away all mention of baptism, and into which instead they have inserted their private practice, immersion. The French Baptist Bible, printed in New York, is therefore, according to the authority of a powerful denomination, the first and only complete translation of the Bible in French, without even excepting the new Swiss version, which, although impregnated with Baptist tendencies, has retained the words baptism and baptize. The French Baptist Bible of New York has otherwise been manufactured according to a very plain receipt, which consists in amalgamating the Protestant and Romish versions, excluding completely the words baptism and baptize, and introducing as frequently as possible the words immersion and immerse. It must cause, besides, no little merriment to French Protestants to receive from across the water, in the only Bible said to be fit for their use, lessons of stiff politeness along with immersion.

The Apostles, the brethren, and the angels have given up the old-fashioned Thou, which is still of universal use in France, as the language of familiarity and friendship. The proscribed Thou is not even placed in the mouth of Jesus Christ, while the disciples in the Lord's prayer are compelled to say with Romanists: "Our Father who are in heaven, hallowed be your name; your kingdom come," etc. And yet, after all these discreditable innovations, the Baptist version has not kept its promise; against its principles and its engagements, it has allowed some Greek to linger behind. For why speak always to us of the precursor as being "John the Baptist"? Why conceal from the people, under the mask of a Greek word, that he was "John the Plunger"? The Baptist version, judged from its own principles, is therefore as yet far from complete. Let also our friends, in order to be consistent, not call themselves any longer Baptists, but stand before the public as the Plungers,—the Plunging denomination, and the Plunging Bible Society.

§ 18. **To immerse means to drown.**—It must be acknowledged, besides, that, after deciding to translate *baptizô*, the Baptists have been most unfortunate in the choice of a suitable word. Intent upon no longer giving Greek to the people, and under the plea of translating and better explaining, they have

replaced the word *baptize*, which was perfectly well known, by the Latin *immerge* or *immerse*, which was unused, and which is far less English than the time-honored baptize. The use of the term was probably confined to astronomy until the Baptists claimed it for their ceremony, and we doubt if even to this day it is understood by common people, unless after coming in contact with Baptists. A long-Anglicized Greek word replaced by an unpopular Latin one! This is truly going from Charybdis into Scylla. This is not improving a translation, it is spoiling it. What would a common man, a Roman Catholic, to whom a colporteur should sell the Baptist Bible, understand by the language of John: "I indeed immerse you in water, but Jesus Christ shall immerse you into the Holy Ghost and into fire"? or by these words of Paul: "John verily immersed with the immersion of repentance"? In reality, the true practical end in the employment of these great, mysterious words, is not to translate and enlighten the Word of God, but, on the contrary, by the aid of the vagueness and obscurity which hover about them, to make the simple-minded accept a new ceremony, as if it were ordered in the Gospel.

This Latin word *immerge* does not mean to plunge, but to drown, to bury under the water and keep there. Thus in Virgil, when Achemenides, in despair, entreats the Trojan sailors to give him death,

he says : “ Spargite me in fluctus, vastoque immergite ponto.” (Æn. iii. 605.) “ Cast me into the waves and drown me in the deep sea.” In the same way further on, the pilot, Palinurus, declares to Æneas, that although he has been cast into the sea from the deck of the vessel, he has not been *immersed*, that is to say, drowned, because he succeeded in swimming to the shore and thus saving his life. (Æn. vi. 342, 348.) But Misenus (vi. 174) is purposely killed by immersion, and his body burned afterwards. Such is the true classical sense of the word *immerse*. Thus, the Baptists virtually insist that John the Baptist and the Apostles have drowned the believers in much water, while Jesus Christ would have drowned them in the Holy Ghost! There are two words, however, which are excellent Anglo-Saxon, and that express correctly and exactly the Baptist practice, namely, *to plunge* and *to dip*. Their baptism is nothing else, for the individual does not remain under water more than a second, and he is hurriedly drawn out that he may not suffocate; their ceremony is therefore nothing but a rapid plunge. But they have wished neither really to translate, nor to call things by their right name, and feeling that such simplicity would destroy the prestige of their doctrine, they have gone out of the way to borrow from the Latin long words rather unused and not understood by the common people.

§ 19. **Classical Meaning of the Word Baptize.**

— But let us come now to the Greek word *baptizô*, or, as it is often met shorter, *baptô*; these two forms, as it is agreed on both sides, being but two different aspects of the same root, and the first derived from the second. Dictionaries attribute to this word no less than fifteen different meanings, the principal of which are immerse, wash, sprinkle, purify, and dye. Amongst these various imports, Baptists have arbitrarily singled out one which suits their favorite practice, and they assert intrepidly that the Greek word has but one meaning, and always the same, namely, that of *immerse*. At this many exclaimed; but then the great champion of the Baptists, Dr. Carson, has declined the authority of all Greek dictionaries, because, forsooth, they were made by Pedobaptists, and he has claimed the right to fix anew the meaning of the word, from researches in classical authors. This demand was promptly acceded to, and the Rev. Robert Wilson in England, and the Rev. Edward Beecher in America, at the same time published each a volume of learned researches on the disputed word, and brought forth an overwhelming array of passages where it is absolutely impossible to translate it by immerse. To give an instance: Homer, describing in a fable a battle between the frogs and a mouse, states that the latter was wounded, and that “the lake was

baptized with its blood,"—ἐβάπττετο αἵματι λιμνη. It is easy to conceive that the lake might have been sprinkled with some drops of blood, possibly even partially dyed with it, but that a lake could have been immersed in the blood of a mouse, no one will believe.

But there is more to say. A close investigation of the Greek classics shows that *baptizô* never has the meaning of immerse, without implying also a permanent submersion, and therefore not in the least a Baptist plunge. Just as its Latin correlative *immerge*, it means, sink under water and keep there, that is to say, drown. Let us quote one instance. The historian Josephus narrates that Herod, wishing to murder the high-priest Aristobulus without creating suspicions, gave the order to secret emissaries to *baptize* him while bathing in a reservoir. He was baptized, indeed, and was immersed, but not after the Baptist fashion, for he was immersed by being kept under water until drowned. Thus in the days of Herod and Josephus, that is to say, in apostolical times, a baptism by immersion was understood to be something similar to the noyades of Nantes during the French Revolution. Baptism by immersion must have been then a sentence of death, which the Apostles would not have inflicted upon the affrighted converts, when they did not intend to carry it out.

(Josephus, De Bello Judaico, i. 22, § 2; Antiq. xv. 3, § 3.) The same writer speaks, in three different places, of vessels sunk at sea as having been baptized. Of course they were not dipped or plunged, but overwhelmed and immersed so as not to rise again. No exception has yet been found to the rule, that, when baptize means immerse, it implies a permanent immersion or drowning; so that the distrust thrown upon dictionaries has only resulted in showing there had been conceded too much in allowing that *baptizô* ever had in a single instance the Baptist meaning. This fashion of attempting to build up a whole doctrine and an important practice upon the mere etymology of a doubtful word will find its analogy in the pedantry of a Chinese mandarin, who would teach his pupils and assert against any and everybody that Englishmen eat only soup for the last meal of the day, proving it triumphantly from the undeniable fact that the word supper comes from soup.

Now that we have secured our position on classical ground, we confess that we really care little to keep it or defend it, and that we have followed the discussion on that field only on the principle that it is sometimes proper "to answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit." For should it be proved a thousand times over again, that in classical authors baptize meant to

plunge, yet it would by no means follow with certainty that the word has precisely the same meaning in Scripture. The sacred writers, obliged to speak the language of heaven through a heathen idiom, have been compelled to modify considerably the import of several Greek words, the precise meaning of which must be determined hereafter, not through classical paganism, but from the use of them in Scripture itself. It is evident that, in the language of the New Testament, an Apostle does not mean exclusively, with the classics, an envoy; the angel is no longer simply a messenger; nor is the Lord's Supper exactly a supper, nor the church an assembly, nor the bishop an inspector, nor the elder an old man, nor the presbytery a lot of superannuated brethren, nor the pastor a herdsman; let us add, nor is baptism a Baptist immersion, even if such had been the secular sense of the word. The classical language, it is true, supplied the Apostles with a basis, a starting-point, but the exact Scriptural sense of any word, and especially *baptizô*, must be ascertained through the Bible itself, — through the religious use made of it by the sacred writers, — and it is there alone that we proceed to investigate it.

§ 20. **Meaning of Baptize in the Septuagint.** —

It is generally admitted that the language of the

New Testament is based upon the Greek idiom of the Septuagint. This ancient version of the Old Testament was followed by the Apostles, and they place it even in the mouth of Jesus Christ. The reason for this is simple; the Seventy were the first to bend profane Greek, and make it express the ideas of the Bible; the Apostles were bound to accept the religious idiom created by their predecessors, and to preserve it while continuing to develop it. Let us, therefore, investigate on this ground, more sure than that of the classics, the import which *baptizô* must have had for the Apostles. This word occurs but four times in the Septuagint, and in no case with the Baptist meaning. 1st. "Judith baptized herself in a fountain of water, by the camp." (Judith xii. 7.) She was then purifying herself from her uncleanness according to the law of Moses, and it is known that the washing prescribed was not an immersion. Moreover, it would have been impracticable for a woman such as Judith to proceed alone, and bathe herself in the open air, in the midst of a camp of twenty thousand men, much less still to defile by a bath the reservoir from which they drank. 2d. In 2 Kings v. 14, the Seventy translate, that "Naaman *baptized* himself in Jordan." It is true that our version says of this baptism that "he dipped seven times," and that the Hebrew appears to countenance it. But the context shows

that the baptism was performed only on the part of the body affected by the leprosy (v. 11), which could be dipped without constituting aught but a partial ablution of the body of Naaman. Moreover it is said (v. 14) that he did according to the word of the man of God; but the latter had simply enjoined upon him to wash himself seven times (v. 10), and by no means to dip. 3d. In Isaiah xxi. 4, we read: "My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me." The Septuagint has "fearfulness baptized me," which means overwhelmed me, surely not dipped me. 4th. In Eccles. xxxiv. 25, a man defiled by the touch of a dead body, *baptizes* himself according to the law of Moses; this, as will be seen from Numb. xix., was unquestionably also a baptism by sprinkling.

The word *baptizô* has thus nowhere in the Septuagint the meaning of immerse. The evidence is still more decisive with reference to the analogous *baptô*. In Daniel iv. 23, 33, the body of Nebuchadnezzar is said to have been baptized with the dew of heaven. We ask if a baptism of dew is like unto sprinkling or immersion!

Finally, we have met in the Septuagint with an admirable passage, which seems to have been overlooked, which, however, brings together all the family of Greek words relating to lustral purifications, and illustrates and fixes the relative and Scriptu-

ral sense of each. The passage is Numb. xix. 13-20, which goes into all the details pertaining to the purification of one defiled by the touch of a dead body. "A clean person (v. 18) shall take hyssop, he shall *baptize* it (βάψει) in the water, he shall sprinkle it (περιρρᾶνῆι) upon the house, the furniture, and all the persons that were there," but especially upon him who touched the dead body. "On the seventh day he shall sprinkle again upon the unclean, who shall purify himself" (ἀγνίζομαι). Then the unclean must immerse (πλυνεῖν) his clothes, and then bathe or rather wash himself (λούσεται) with water. Finally, the man who has not been sprinkled has not been purified at all (v. 20), and the water which purifies the unclean is called by the Seventy the "water of sprinkling" (ὕδωρ ῥαντισμοῦ). The hyssop itself was *baptized* in order to serve as sprinkler, which means that the stem of the plant remained dry in the hand of the purifier, while the other end alone, which consisted in spongy flowers, was impregnated with water in order to sprinkle. The baptism of the hyssop consisted therefore only in its partial contact with water, not in an immersion of the whole. The hyssop is baptized, the unclean is sprinkled upon, the clothes alone are immersed, being dipped and held under water. The water which purifies the unclean is a water of sprinkling. There is noth-

ing wanting to fix the respective meaning of these words. The Seventy, finally, in another passage, already referred to, have succeeded in giving us the most complete and intense light upon the form of baptism which could possibly be desired, by informing us that this purification by sprinkling upon the unclean from contact with the dead, is nothing else but a baptism, neither more nor less. They tell us expressly in Eccles. xxxiv. 30, that such a man is BAPTIZED (*βαπτίζόμενος ἀπὸ νεκροῦ*). The proof is complete, it leaves nothing to be desired, and we should not know what to add to it. It is fully established, that, according to the Septuagint, to baptize is not to immerse, but to sprinkle with water.

§ 21. **What is required for a Proof that Immersion is in the New Testament.**—After the Septuagint we come to the New Testament. There the Baptists are bound to establish three points without which their doctrine cannot stand. 1st. That there is in the New Testament at least one well authenticated and indisputable case of baptism by immersion. 2d. That there is not one single case of baptism by sprinkling, for that one case would justify the Pedobaptist practice. 3d. That any change in the mode of applying the water or in the quantity used invalidates baptism and makes it of no effect, otherwise, again, sprinkling might be allowed as a

convenient substitute for immersion. This latter condition of the Baptist doctrine is rigorously indispensable. For if some one should attempt to prove from the Gospel that a missionary is forbidden to ride in a carriage, or to travel with a carpet-bag, or to wear shoes, it would not be sufficient to show that the Apostles went on foot, without shoes, without baggage, and with a staff only; it would be necessary still to prove that no missionary after them can do otherwise without disobeying a Divine order. Or, again, if a Lutheran insisted that unleavened bread is essential to the Lord's Supper, and that the sacrament when celebrated without such bread is null and void, and no sacrament at all, it would require more than the easy proof that Jesus Christ and his Apostles used unleavened bread; it would have to be shown besides, that there is such a positive command not to use any other bread, that any change in the substance of the latter destroys the sacrament.

We shall see that the Baptists are still worse off than the above Lutheran, for they cannot even prove the first point, much less the two others; and we shall establish that, while there is not in the New Testament a single certain case of baptism by immersion, there are on the contrary several decided cases of baptism that took place otherwise. Let us pass first in review a few passages where

the words *baptism* and *baptize* are employed in the original, but have been translated otherwise in the common version.

§ 22. **The pretended diverse Immersions.**— If we are to credit the Baptist version, we shall find in the New Testament not only immersion, but what is more startling, “diverse immersions.” (Heb. ix. 10.) Let some one explain to us what these various kinds of immersion can be! We understood well enough the old version, which speaks of “diverse washings.” For we can conceive some variety in the partial applications of water; it can be poured out, or sprinkled, or made to wash this or that part of the body. But can one imagine a diversity in immersion? The moment that all is dipped, the application of the water is very uniform. Are there many ways of sinking in water, or of drowning? These “diverse immersions” are about as easily understood as diverse straight lines, or diverse perpendiculars upon a given point, or the diverse centres of a sphere; it is simply an absurdity of our zealous innovators, which they should not have charged to the Apostles. If they absolutely wished to innovate, they could have translated “diverse baptisms,” which is conformed to the original, and the thirteenth verse would have immediately pointed out one of these baptisms, that of the unclean, as made by “sprinkling.”

The same must be said of the pretended “immersions of cups, pots, brazen vessels, and beds.” The original speaks here of *baptisms* for inanimate objects, the variety of which is well understood from the law of Moses. For, these objects were sometimes sprinkled (Numb. xix. 18), sometimes plunged (Lev. xi. 32), without taking into account what the Jewish tradition might have added, the law of Moses prescribing, indeed, in some cases, the immersion of inanimate objects, without ever authorizing in a single instance that of persons. We read again, in Rev. xix. 13, “He was clothed in a vesture *dipped* in blood.” The original reads here *baptized*, but the Baptist version has not ventured to translate *immersed*, but *dyed* in blood. In truth, the vesture of the warrior could have been *sprinkled* in the battle with the blood of the enemy, but not immersed in it.

§ 23. **The Immersion of the Pharisees.** — Finally, if baptize means invariably immerse, it must be acknowledged that the Pharisees were decidedly the strongest Baptists that ever existed. Not content with immersing their furniture, their pots, and their beds (*βαπτισμοὺς κλινῶν*, Mark vii. 4), they immersed themselves several times every day. For we read (Mark vii. 4) that “when they come from market they eat not except they *wash*.” “Except

they *baptize*," says the original. "Except they *immerse*," says the Baptist version. And Luke (xi. 38) tells us that "the Pharisee marvelled that Jesus had not first *washed*, or in the Greek *baptized* himself, or in the Baptist idiom, *immersed* himself, before dinner." If the baptism of water was an immersion, we can scarcely imagine the excessive difficulties which those poor people must have daily met with, even under the most favorable circumstances, before they could enjoy their dinner. This perpetual immersion, this aquatic life, must have considerably injured the health of some, and tired out the rest. Then, how could they dine at all when travelling in a country where water is so scarce as Judæa? Did they fast every time they could not find the appliances of immersion? In connection with this habit, the Apostle John informs us (ii. 6-8) that "after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, there were in the nuptial hall of Cana six waterpots of stone, containing two or three firkins apiece when filled up to the brim." How could one immerse himself in such vases! No, common sense as well as Scripture teaches us that this baptism before the repast was not an immersion, but simply a washing, which consisted in pouring water upon the hands, as in 2 Kings iii. 11; Matt. xv. 20. In the early ages of the Church, however, devout Jews and Pharisees, on account

of the undue importance they attached to their watery ceremony, were generally called "the Baptists," *βαπτισταί*, in distinction from Christians (see Arrian on Epictetus, II. 2; also Kitto, Jour. of Sacred Litt., VI. 263). This is, historically, the oldest use of the name. "A Baptist," in those apostolical times, was not considered a Christian, but a Jew, and it was another name for a Pharisee.

§ 24. **John the Baptist has neither prescribed nor described the Mode of Baptism.**—In all the above passages which we have just examined, we find *baptism* and *baptize* in the original, but not in the translation, and our investigation has had, therefore, to follow the Greek text. We come now to consider another class of passages, where all the versions, save the Baptist Bible, have suffered the original expressions to stand.

We begin with the first baptisms that are mentioned in the Gospel, those which John the Baptist performed, and which are reckoned by the thousand; for he baptized multitudes. It is certainly here, at its very origin, if ever, that we should expect a description of the ceremony which will leave no doubt upon the mode of baptism. But one is surprised to meet in the Gospel with no positive information on this point. It is easy, however, to understand the reason for this. Moses had estab-

lished "diverse baptisms" (Heb. ix. 10), namely, an immersion for some inanimate objects, vessels, pots, and soiled garments (Lev. xi. 32), and a baptism by sprinkling for all the rest, especially for persons (Numb. xix. 18). The whole Jewish people perfectly understood both the idea and the mode of baptism; they knew that it was an external purification for sin and uncleanness, and that its mode consisted in a partial washing. They knew, moreover, that the prophets, in predicting the times of the New Covenant, had announced that God would purify his people, not by plunging them into the water, but by "*sprinkling*" clean water upon them (Ezek. xxxvi. 25); and this is why it is unnecessary for John to explain his baptism, and also why the Gospel does not deem it appropriate to repeat what the Old Testament has already taught, at length and in detail; for the New Testament, in all its pages, supposes an acquaintance with the Old. If it were otherwise, if John the Baptist had introduced a new doctrine, or a new ceremony, he was bound to explain it and fix its mode. Indeed, the Gospel would be a very imperfect and incomplete book, if it had prescribed to us a practice new and unknown, without carefully describing it; and we could then, with a good conscience, dispense altogether with its observance.

§ 25. **The Waters of Enon.** — The Baptists, nevertheless, have thought to find a proof that John baptized by immersion in the fact that “John baptized at Enon, because there was much water there.” (John iii. 23.) “What can be the use,” they say, “of much water, unless to immerse?” But let us reflect for a moment that John dwelt in the desert, that he was surrounded by immense crowds, by a considerable camp, and let it be asked, Was it not necessary, if only to quench the thirst of the people, that he should choose a place in the desert where there was much water? Add to this, that these Jews practised daily the Mosaic ablutions, and that the baptism of John, even if performed by sprinkling, was nevertheless a partial washing, and we have more than sufficient to explain that “much water,” without having recourse to immersion. In any desert there is always a scarcity of water, and what is considered in such a region as much water would not be reckoned as such in other places. When the Israelites wandered in the desert, did they not always establish their camp, from preference, in the place where there was the most water, and must we conclude from this that they immersed themselves? For the rest, if our explanation does not satisfy, we could easily do without it. It is in fact perhaps superfluous, for there is really no

mention made in the original of "much water," but of "several waters," ὕδατα πολλά, which can mean nothing else than "several springs." This passage of John is perfectly analogous to that of Exodus xv. 27: "They came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and they encamped there by the waters." Let us make haste to add, that they did not immerse themselves in these wells. Under any circumstances, the fact that there was much water at Enon no more proves that the people were immersed, than the fact that there was much wine in Cana proves that the disciples became intoxicated.

§ 26. **A Half-Million baptized by John.** — Finally, let us take up as a whole the details of the baptism of John, and we shall find out, by a thorough critical examination of the text, that he certainly did not immerse when he baptized. We are told (Matt. iii. 5, 6), that "Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan, went out to him, and were baptized of him." Surely, here are plenty of people baptized; let us fix somewhat the number of the population indicated in these words. It was all Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and more still, that is to say, an extensive and populous region. History relates that some years later there perished no less than

eleven hundred thousand persons at the siege of Jerusalem. Josephus tells us further, that thirty-five years after the death of Christ there were in Jerusalem at the Feast of the Passover three millions of persons. These data suppose in the region indicated by the Gospel a probable population of six millions of souls. But in order to place ourselves in a quite safe position, let us be satisfied with the half of this number, and say three millions. Then let us suppose again, that, of this whole population, one sixth only went to listen to John and be baptized by him. This is a very modest valuation, since the text says, that all the inhabitants of this region went, and we remain, doubtless, below the truth. Well, this sixth forms a total of five hundred thousand persons. By making them defile in a procession, two by two, they would form a column over a hundred miles long.

§ 27. **More than Herculean Labor of the Forerunner.** — All this crowd was baptized by a single man! To form some idea of this undertaking, let us say something of the manual labors to which immersion compels the baptizer. First, it is well understood that the candidate ought not to baptize himself, but he is to be baptized by another. He must be in the arms of the baptist operator, like an inert and dead body which is going to be buried

in water. It becomes requisite to throw him backwards, to submerge him under the water, and raise him again to his first position. Immersion supposes, therefore, in the operator a considerable muscular effort, and this the more, because, in the water up to his waist, he does not feel steady, and his powers are partly paralyzed. Let us besides say something of the time which John the Baptist had at his disposal for accomplishing this formidable labor. He had already finished baptizing the people, when he baptized Jesus. (Luke iii. 21.) The Lord was then just thirty years old, and John six months older than he. We see by Numbers iv. 3, 47 that the Jewish priests did not enter upon their duties before the age of thirty. It was the time when John, himself son of a priest, must have commenced his ministry, — he could not do it before, — and Jesus commenced at the same age. The official career of the Forerunner and his baptizing are then limited to a period of six months. Another independent proof of this fact is obtained from Luke iii. 1 – 3; where we are told that John did not begin to baptize until the 15th year of Tiberius Cæsar, which is equivalent to the 29th after the birth of Christ. Add now the six months by which John was older than Christ, and you find that he was thirty years old when he began to baptize, which until the time when Jesus was himself of the same age makes ex-

actly six months. Six months only to immerse five hundred thousand people! He did not perform miracles (John x. 41), and was therefore, in the manual labor of baptism, reduced to his own strength, and limited, like every other human being, by his capacity for enduring fatigue.

See him at his work. He commences baptizing, and admit, that on the first day, by a great effort, he succeeds in immersing one hundred. But at this rate, and supposing that he works constantly, without the intermission of a single day, without even resting on the Sabbath, more than fifteen years are required to baptize his half-million. Even then, where should he take the time to preach and to fulfil the religious duties of the law of Moses? Well! concede to him rest from immersion for the Sabbath day only, and make him work all the other days without exception, and you will find that in order to baptize his half-million within six months, he should have immersed at least three thousand two hundred each day! Can you conceive such a manual labor? Do you reckon that, according to the Baptist view, there were no children there, nothing but adults, and that each must have weighed on the average at least 120 pounds, a burden which at each baptism had first to be thrown back, then dipped, then raised again under the most fatiguing and unfavorable circumstances? It was a total bur-

den of 384,000 pounds which John had to carry in his arms a first time to bury it in the water, and a second time to raise it up, or altogether a total of 768,000 pounds to lift daily, while sunk up to his waist in water, and staggering in the current of Jordan. This is equivalent exactly to 384 tons, the load of a ship, which John the Baptist raised each day without expiring under the task, and he performed alone the work of a hundred robust porters. Here is, certainly, a view of baptism far from spiritual, but one is bound, both by the facts and by the logic of numbers, to adopt it, if baptism must absolutely be an immersion. John the Baptist, then, is nothing else but a thaumaturgist, who has surpassed the labors of Hercules, and whose heroic baptisms are worthy of figuring amongst the miracles of the breviary.

§ 28. **Impossible Scene of the Three Thousand immersed.**—We shall follow a similar line of argument in reference to the three thousand who were baptized by the Apostles in Jerusalem. (Acts ii. 41.) They were all baptized “the same day,” and even in the course of a few hours of that day, since a part of it had already been spent in preaching to the multitudes, and their baptism was a result of this preaching. If this baptism took place by immersion, it must be acknowledged that the mission

of the Apostles consisted essentially in a manual labor of the most overwhelming kind. Supposing that the twelve had all been present, and all vigorous enough to work in the water, they would have had on an average to immerse each two hundred and fifty persons without stop or rest. It was for each a load of three hundred quintals to carry twice, or six hundred quintals of human flesh to lift in the space of a few hours. Imagination draws back before the magnitude of the performance. The Baptists have consequently made an hypothesis which they would give us as a certainty, namely, that the disciples of the little Church at Jerusalem have aided the Apostles, and baptized with them. But this renders the thing only more ridiculous, more incredible, and more unworthy of the Gospel. Suppose, indeed, the Apostles incapable of performing their manual, or, as we might say, carnal labor of immersion, and calling to their assistance all the other disciples. Picture to yourself, then, the whole Apostolate, and the whole Church of Jerusalem, sunk all the afternoon in water up to the waist, and at times up to the neck, in order to grasp in their arms the bodies of three thousand men, to throw them back, immerse them, and place them upright again! How could these disciples, so poor, so few in number that they met in an upper chamber which could hold them all, dispose, in a city

occupied by their enemies, of such a bathing establishment, changes of dress, halls for dressing and undressing? When previously their Master had sent them to preach and to baptize, he had enjoined upon them not to carry two coats. How then did they perform immersion? Did they keep on wet clothes all day, or did they undress and officiate without garments at each baptism? Indeed, the Fathers of the Church, in order to practise a Scriptural immersion, did not allow any garments to be worn at baptism, not even by women. They would immerse only the naked individual, but not his clothes, which fact is fully admitted by Dr. Carson. Indeed, who would think of purifying his hands even symbolically by putting on gloves to wash them. But no; the absurdity is too gross, too glaring; and it must be owned that it is absolutely impossible that either John the Baptist or the Apostles should have ever immersed; it was only a baptism by sprinkling or affusion which they could have given.

§ 29. **The Baptism of the Eunuch was not an Immersion.**—The baptism of the eunuch is the great war-engine of immersionists. So much is this the case, that their great champion, Dr. Carson, writes: “The man who can read this passage (i. e. Acts viii. 36 – 39), and not see *immersion* in it, must have something in his mind unfavorable to the in-

vestigation of truth. As long as I fear God, I cannot, for all the kingdoms of the world, resist the evidence of this single document. Nay, had I no more conscience than Satan himself, I could not, as a scholar, attempt to expel *immersion* from this account. All the ingenuity of all the critics in Europe could not silence the evidence of this passage. Amidst the most violent perversion that it can sustain on the rack, it will still cry out, *Immersion, immersion!*" (Carson, p. 128.) Alas! that the threat of a Baptist curse and the impending danger of passing for a confederate of Satan should have failed to make us perceive a single gleam of immersion in this passage! But let us produce our reasons after first quoting the text:—

“And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water,” etc. (Acts viii. 36–39.)

Preconceived ideas have an astonishing hold on the imagination, which may explain why both Baptists and Pedobaptists in reading this account see Philip and the eunuch standing upon the margin of a pool of water, and preparing to walk down into it.

But there is nothing of this in the text. True, "they go down," but from whence do they go down, — from the edge of the water, from the shore of a pond? Not at all. They go down from where they were when they halted, namely, from the chariot. The text says positively that Philip had first "come up" on the chariot (v. 31) before he went down. We must not add to the text by making them come down twice, once from the chariot to the road, and a second time from the dry ground into the water, nor must we make them go up twice in the inverse order, for there is but one descent and one ascent. Where was the chariot when they stopped? Right over the water, ἦλθον ἐπί τι ὕδωρ. To be correct, the translation should not read they came *unto*, but *over*, a certain water. The chariot was being driven through some pool of water, when they stopped in the very midst of it. The pool of course could not be deep, since they drove through it, and, moreover, it contained but "a little water," τι ὕδωρ. They alighted from the chariot direct into the water, and went up again from it into the chariot. This descent from the chariot and ascent into it again is the only one mentioned in the text, and can have no reference whatever to the mode of baptism, of which it formed no part, and about which there is nothing said or hinted here.

This view, however, which we hold to be the only

one conformed to the text, is not essential to our purpose, and we are prepared to give to the Baptists the benefit of the usual idea implying two descents and two ascents. Let us agree, therefore, that they first come down from the chariot and then walk to the edge of the water. Now, according to our version, they go down *into* the water. The Greek εἰς means just as well *to* or *unto* the water, as in Matt. xv. 24, xxii. 4, for it is met in Scripture no less than 538 times with this latter sense. Afterwards they come up *out of* the water; the Greek ἐκ is found 119 times in Scripture meaning *from*, against 89 that it means *out of*. In the analogous baptism of Jesus Christ (Matt. iii. 16), the preposition used is ἀπό, which means only *from*, and not *out of* the water. The most probable meaning would then be, that, in order to perform a baptism, they walked *to* the water and after *from* it. But both meanings being justified as far as the Greek prepositions are concerned, the Baptists might choose theirs, and we by the same right might adopt ours, according to which the two personages would have merely proceeded close to the water without going down into it. It is quite enough, at any rate, that the passage should be susceptible of a construction different from that of the Baptists, to prevent its being used as a proof for immersion, and strictly we are not required to proceed with this discussion any further. But we feel

strong enough on other points of the passage, to make to the Baptists another gratuitous concession and yet refute them on their own ground. Let us admit, therefore, for a while, that, in order to be baptized, Philip with the eunuch, and even Jesus with John the Baptist, have really all gone down into the water, and that they came out of it, and we shall still ask, Where do you see the immersion? There are in every case of immersion three successive and very distinct acts: — 1st. The minister and the candidate both walk down into the water. 2d. The immersion takes place. 3d. They come out of the water. Reading our text with all docility, and translating exactly as our Baptist friends would have us, we see the first and the third acts mentioned, but as to the immersion itself not a word of it. The coming into the water and out of it are not the baptism itself, but only concomitant circumstances. Once in the water, did Philip plunge the eunuch, or pour water upon him *with his hand*? There is not a single word on the mode of baptism in the very passage which, above all others, was to prove immersion! It is very like the tragedy of Hamlet with the part of Hamlet omitted.

But such is the utter weakness of the Baptist view of this, their best passage, that we can afford to proceed from concession to concession, to grant them all they ask; surrender freely all the positions

we have gained, and yet defeat them. Granted, then, that the mode of baptism is fairly described or implied in these expressions, "They went down into the water and out of it." We shall still ask, Where is the promised immersion? They have gone down into the water. Very well; but how deep have they gone into it? That is the question. Did they bury and submerge themselves? Did they put the head under water? Decidedly not. The narrative affirms most positively the contrary, for it says that both the baptizer and the baptized went down together, and alike into the water. It does not make the one go deeper than the other. But Philip was not immersed; neither, therefore, was the eunuch. They both went down *into* the water, but not *under* the water. Baptists add to Scripture the dreams of their imagination, when they make the eunuch go deeper into the water than Philip, when they lead one of them *into* and the other *under* the water.

It is known that the Jews wore a short robe, went about with naked legs and bare feet resting on sandals. This attire enabled them to wade through water without inconvenience, and even with pleasure. The eunuch and Philip were riding in the desert, where water is always scarce, for there is not a single stream of water between Jerusalem and Gaza; they pass over a place where they

notice "some water," *τι ὕδωρ*. The water always runs into the lowest spots; in the desert it will be found in holes and in the bed of ravines. If the chariot was not actually driving through the water, the two personages would have, of course, to walk down to get at the water, and walk up again. They have no vessel in readiness to draw from the shallow water, they walk therefore into it, Philip stoops, takes water up in his hands, and pours it over the head of his companion. Such is the only explanation consistent with the text, for there is no means of there introducing immersion, without doing violence to some portion of the narrative. Our description of this baptism agrees with the oldest sculptures and mosaics representing the baptism of Jesus Christ, such as those of Beneventum and Ravenna. The numerous pictures and sculptures found in the catacombs of Rome, and which date from the earliest ages of the Church, are also unanimous for this form of baptism. They represent Jesus standing in water, and John the Baptist on dry ground, pouring from the hollow of his hand water over the head of the Saviour.

The importance Baptists attach to this passage is sufficient to justify us in offering a simpler and more popular method of showing that it contains no vestige of immersion. Let us apply its words to something else than baptism, and transfer them to

the regions of common life, where experience and common sense may more easily avail. An Egyptian reads the narrative of a journey through Russia. Two travellers are described as driving together in a sleigh; in a certain place they stop, and alighting, *they went down both into* the snow, and afterwards *came up out of* the snow into the sleigh. As will be noticed, these are exactly the Scriptural expressions, as translated by Baptists; nothing is changed except that snow is placed instead of water. Now what a miserable pedant would this African be held, if he were stanchly to assert, against any and everybody, that the two travellers did both certainly then and there plunge, dip, and immerse themselves heels over head into the snow! But what need have we to speak of snow; let us return to the water. Every time that a man fords a brook or a stream he invariably *goes down into* the water, and again *comes up out of* the water,—and for all this he has neither been plunged nor immersed. Why then talk of the fanciful immersion of the eunuch? In investigating this passage, we have made to the Baptists many unnecessary concessions; we have complacently followed after the shadow of immersion in all the paths, real or imaginary, which were pointed out to us; yet we cannot grasp the phantom. Look at it in the face and it vanishes, it is nowhere to be found. We have conceded much,

but there is one thing which we cannot absolutely concede, and that is adding to the Word of God the dreams of sectarian imagination !

§ 30. **The Fishes of Tertullian.** — Tertullian, at least, quotes a much stronger passage in behalf of immersion, and it is singular that our modern Baptists should have declined to take advantage of it. Basing himself on these words of our Lord to his disciples, “I will make you fishers of men,” (Matt. iv. 19,) he concludes that, in order to be saved through baptism, the Christian must commence by making himself a fish in the water. (De Baptismo, II. 2.) This picturesque argument should, however, rather teach that the sinner must be plucked away from the state of immersion, which here figures sin, and that, once converted, great care should be taken not to bring him back to it, as would the Baptists.

§ 31. **Baptist Immersion is a Parody of the Burial of Jesus Christ.** — The last passage in behalf of immersion, which we have to consider, is that of Rom. vi. 2–5, with its parallels, Gal. iii. 26, 27, and Col. ii. 11, 12, where mention is made of “being buried with Christ by baptism into death.” We have already shown, while treating of the baptism of the Holy Ghost (§ 4), that it is impossible

to apply these passages to water-baptism, since it would imply that it is the ceremony which saves us, sanctifies us, and accomplishes within us all the work of God. We need not explain again this spiritual sense, which is so evident, but we will trace out some of the revolting absurdities involved in the carnal interpretation forced on these words. With the simple and ignorant, who cannot raise their eyes above the water of baptism, and who, like certain disciples of John the Baptist, seem to ignore the baptism of the Holy Ghost, this passage appears most conclusive for immersion. They do not perceive that the above texts describe this baptism, which causes us to die with Christ, under four figures, — “a burial, a plant, a garment, and a circumcision made without hands”; that these figures must all share the same fate, be either all spiritualized or all materialized; and that it is an impious conceit to practise only one of them while rejecting the others. Romanists are more scrupulous here than Baptists, for they materialize at least two, the burial and the garment, and, in order better to conform to Scripture, array the neophyte in a white robe. Moreover, while we are told but twice to be buried with Christ, we are enjoined no less than five times to be *crucified* with him. (Gal. ii. 20, v. 24, etc.) Consequently some fanatics, such as Maria Peters and others, trusting to the carnal

interpretation of Baptists, have caused themselves to be crucified in obedience to God. "The holy Catharine of Sienna" underwent also by a miracle a similar crucifixion. It is again by following this same Baptist sense that Romanists do not perform their devotions without a cross; that they walk on their knees, and through twelve stations, the *via crucis*, the "path of the cross," which ends by burying one's self in the tomb with Christ. They crucify themselves much more than the Baptists bury themselves, and they bring forth for their crucifixion an array of passages far more plausible and imposing than those adduced for immersion. Even in their baptism, Romanists carry out the idea of burial with greater conformity to the letter of Scripture than Baptists. In obedience to these words of Jesus Christ, "For that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial," (Matt. xxvi. 12,) they practise in baptism an unction of oil over the head, and they think that if a sprinkling of oil implied sufficiency for the Lord a symbol of burial, a sprinkling of water will also do the same. If in addition they make the sign of the cross over the person baptized, it comes from their anxiety to leave out nothing which is best adapted to symbolize in material figures a death and burial with the crucified Saviour. Are the Baptists as scriptural as Romanists in their theatrical representation of the death of Christ?

We utterly deny that immersion has any analogy with the burial of Christ, unless as a parody and profanation of a holy thing. The truth is, that after his death, the body of our Saviour was embalmed, wrapped in a shroud, carried inside of a vault hewn out of the rock, and either stretched on a level with the floor, or rather raised up in a niche. Baptists, on the contrary, would have the people believe that he was buried according to modern fashion deeply underground, which is false. And yet, on the ignorance of such a plain scriptural fact rests all their ceremony of immersion. Moreover, had the body of Christ been let down into the ground and covered with earth, where is the analogy between burial and immersion? Sprinkling comes much nearer to it. At a funeral the burying element is always thrown upon the body, and thus alone is it buried. The water, therefore, should be applied to the body, and not the body to the water. The sprinkling or affusion of water might represent burial, but immersion never will. The Baptist minister and the candidate both proceed down into the water. But is it usual for those who bury the dead to half entomb themselves in the grave with the corpse? Our Saviour was buried for three days, the Baptists do not bury for three seconds. The idea of sepulture implies at least some duration, but a rapid plunge not only has not

the slightest analogy with a burial, but stands in contrast. The most wretched actor on the last of theatres would not risk himself in acting a funeral, where the dead would not lie even three seconds in the tomb. The conditions indispensable to a symbolic burial are in no way fulfilled by immersion. It is but a burlesque, a miserable parody, of the death of Jesus Christ, and that is all.

§ 32. **Baptism as a Burial is an Anachronism.**

—Imagination and credulity are not the only requisites indispensable in order to transform baptism into a ceremony of burial. A strange anachronism has still to be added. John must have buried with Christ all the people and disciples in the water of baptism four years before the death of Christ himself! And the disciples, in their turn, must have buried others after the same fashion! The people must have been buried with Christ long before he was buried himself! But the people baptized by John had not the slightest conception of a crucified Messiah; the Apostles themselves began faintly to understand atonement only when their Master was on the eve of parting with them. It must then be acknowledged, either that their baptism did not bury at all with Christ, or else that they buried the people unknown to them, just as Father Bataillon baptizes and saves Chinese without their suspecting any-

thing about it. Then, through his baptism, Christ would have been buried with Christ three years before his death, which is rather startling. It is true that it was before his death that the Lord instituted the Holy Supper, but this was only a few moments before, when the scene of crucifixion was already beginning, and his disciples could understand his atoning death. Besides the Lord gave, but did not himself take the Sacrament, since he could not, even in a figure, eat his own body and drink his own blood.

§ 33. **Immersion is a difficult, complicated, and expensive Ceremony, which leads to Ridicule and excludes Edification.** — A superficial study of baptism once in our younger days had drifted us pretty far into the Baptist current, when the scandalous spectacle of immersion created misgivings, and caused us to turn back. At the sight of what we then witnessed for the first time, we were overwhelmed with the feeling that neither Jesus Christ nor his Apostles could have instituted a ceremony so complicated, and so far removed from the simplicity of the Gospel. We must be permitted here to describe this ceremony, with the leading circumstances which it involves. First, it is a very expensive practice. We do not live in the desert, and in towns or populous regions there is no fa-

cility for immersing in the river and under the canopy of heaven. Churches, therefore, have to be constructed especially in view of immersion. It requires, in the middle of the edifice, a basin large enough to allow both the minister and the candidate "to go down" according to Scripture, which descent necessitates steps resting in the water, and occupying some room; then sufficient space must remain to allow the rite of burial to take place. There is need, therefore, of a reservoir of considerable size, very expensive, and occupying a large space. Then seats must be arranged so as to allow the whole audience to witness the ceremony, a desideratum scarcely ever obtained, even by building the church in the shape of an amphitheatre. After this, the church must contain at least two, if not three, private dressing-rooms, one for men, another for women, and the third for the minister, where they can take off their clothes and put them on again after drying themselves. A pretty complicated system of pipes is also necessary in order to bring in and carry away the enormous supply of water needed. In towns where there are no water-works, and where water must be carried in buckets, the labor is considerable; we have seen several men employed for a half-day in filling one of these basins. But this is not all;—in winter, ice-cold water would suit neither the candidate nor the offi-

ciating minister ; the church therefore also requires an extensive apparatus for warming the water. A Christian friend, who, without being present at the ceremony, had only witnessed these formidable preparations, confessed to us that they were quite sufficient to convince him that the Apostles could never have practised immersion, seeing that they administered baptism promptly, and wherever they had been preaching on their travels.

The basin once filled, it is out of the question to immerse the people in the garments they wear. It would be not only indecent, especially for females, but very awkward, because, once drenched, they could scarcely move, and still less pull off their adhering clothes. A peculiar dress had, therefore, to be invented, long and loose robes which both sexes put on, the men being thus publicly dressed in the habit of women, contrary to the injunction of Scripture. (Deut. xxii. 5.) But these robes swelled out and floated on the water in an indecent manner. American genius has therefore invented the sewing all round them of leaden bullets. Invention has been carried still further, and the officiating minister is dressed, under the baptismal gown, with a complete water-proof suit. Boots, trousers, and vest are all of one piece, so as to protect against the dangerous consequences of a prolonged stay in water. (Poor Apostles ! if they had only known the virtues

of india-rubber when they had to stand all day in water to immerse the thousands!) Since one is immersed but once in a life-time, it is not worth the while to have a baptismal robe made on purpose, and, besides, the very making of the gown, with its delays, might cool the ardor of many a candidate, and allow time for reconsideration. The Baptist churches are therefore compelled to have their own vestiary stored, in readiness for any emergency.

It must be acknowledged that all this indispensable water-apparatus, the peculiar construction of the building, and the set of baptismal robes, increases considerably the expenses of worship, probably no less than twenty to thirty per cent, so that the same money needed to construct four Baptist churches would more than erect five, were it not for the peculiar ceremony. Immersion has thus already absorbed millions of dollars in the United States alone, and France, with Switzerland, may have, sooner or later, to pay dear for it. It would, perhaps, be worth the while to question whether the Apostles have really enjoined this expenditure, and whether it would not be more consistent with their principles to spend that money in the evangelization of the people.

But let us come to the ceremony itself. In front are seated the neophytes with an embarrassed air, dressed in black gowns similar to cassocks, and in this guise scarcely recognizable by their

own friends. A stranger would take them to be priests or monkish penitents, about to perform some great ceremony. The minister also officiates in the same cassock, which conceals the water-proof vestment. After preaching in that dress, he goes down first in the basin, and then invites the candidates to follow him, one after another. The congregation, who see them disappear under the floor, and whose curiosity is excited, all rise; they press forward, push, and elbow each other, so as to see the ceremony. We know of a Baptist brother who, thus pushed, accidentally fell into the basin from a great height, and came near being drowned. Many persons present have come from curiosity, drawn by the grotesque scene, and although the minister has carefully warned them to behave with propriety and not to laugh, they cannot always restrain themselves. In most cases, when the neophyte steps into this deep water, fear and anxiety are vividly depicted on his face; the minister, therefore, loses no time in pronouncing these sacramental words falsified: "I immerse thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Then, grasping him in his arms, he throws him back violently, sinks the body under water, and promptly raises it up again. The subject immersed is then panting for breath, sneezing, blinded by the water, and he staggers. The minister holds him up with one

arm, while the other is engaged in wiping the face and eyes with his handkerchief. Then the immersed ascends from the water through the same step-ladder which brought him down, and hastens through the church to the dressing-room, leaving behind a stream of water wherever he goes. Last of all, the minister hastens to his dressing-room, and the service is abruptly closed, unless there be present a second minister to proceed with it. During the whole of the ceremony, it is morally impossible that the candidate could have quietly collected his thoughts, calmly edified himself, and prayed. On the contrary, he has undergone a difficult, complicated, and even fearful operation, which has claimed for externals all his attention, and this pretended solemnity invariably closes with towels, combs, and a tedious toilet.

In perusing these details, several will be astonished, some will be tempted to disbelieve. But let no one think that these are fancy details, for they are not only drawn from nature, but they are essential to the ceremony. Which of them would you leave out? Which of them do you think could be dispensed with? How are you going to practise immersion in a different and more appropriate manner? Baptists, of course, have done everything in their power to render their ceremony as solemn and as far removed from ridicule as practicable, and,

after all, it remains from necessity just such as we have described it,— a practice entirely opposed to the simplicity of the Gospel, and highly repugnant to a somewhat enlightened sense of propriety. We have described, however, immersion as it occurs under the best circumstances ; namely, in a church edifice. Had we depicted immersion in the open air, and the burial of believers through the ice, we should have had to go into more offensive details, and to speak of wild scenes which almost baffle description.

§ 34. **The Ceremony is sensual and carnal, dangerous to Health and even a Peril to Life.**

— But the love of great ceremonies is deeply seated in human nature ; it forms indeed the principal attraction in Romanism and Paganism. Why be surprised if this same tendency manifests itself in the bosom of Evangelical Christianity, and endeavors to gain ground and make itself plausible ! There is in this dramatical ceremony of immersion something irresistible to weak minds. It possesses for some a fascination of allurements, for others a fascination of terror, for all the captivating charm of mystery, just as is the case with the ceremonies of initiation in free-masonry. And with both the Baptist and the masonic initiations, those who have undergone the ordeal are forever after seized with an irresistible

desire to inflict it upon others. We touch here a law of human nature, that innate love of overdoing the ceremony, and of absorbing the spiritual sense in the carnal type. Carried away by a similar impulse, the Apostle Peter was once tempted before his conversion to apply the sensual meaning to the water of baptism. "Peter says unto Jesus, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!" Here is exactly our immersionist. The moment he thinks the symbolic water good for anything, it must be applied first to his feet, then to his hands, then even to his head, or, in a word, to the whole body. But Jesus instantly reproves the carnal mind of his disciple; he shows him that a partial washing is best adapted to the figure, the spiritual import of which might otherwise easily be forgotten in the form. "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." (John xiii. 8-10.) This circumstance explains, undoubtedly, why at a later period Peter established such a severe contrast between the baptism of the Holy Ghost and that of water, which he lowers as "putting away of the filth of the flesh." (1 Pet. iii. 21.) He remembered having been tempted once to exaggerate the value of a baptism of water,

and having been reprov'd by his Master for his carnal mind. The blind man whom the Lord healed, more humble, did not attempt to carry obedience beyond the injunction of his Master; he was satisfied with washing his eyes in the pool of Siloam, although unbelief might have prompted him to perform a complete immersion as more efficacious than a partial affusion of the water.

Some Baptists, to be more Scriptural, baptize only in the open air, in ponds or rivers, and even often break ice in the midst of a rigorous northern winter, in order to immerse their new-made adherents. This practice is constant in America, and becomes often a necessity from the fact that in country places a bathing-tub of sufficient dimensions is seldom found. Indeed, the first immersions performed in a locality almost always take place out of doors, until Baptists become numerous enough to build a chapel with the immersing apparatus. But it is easily understood that, if a person is converted to Baptist views in winter, he will not be made to wait till summer to fulfil the pressing duty of immersion, the more so because his convictions might grow cold while the water of the river is growing warm. They hasten therefore to perform the ceremony at any risk. The candidate is told that there is nothing to fear for his health, that God protects in a special manner those who

obey him, and that this which under any other circumstances would be an imprudence will prove but a blessing. Certain it is, that these fair promises of a special interposition of Providence are not realized, and that some pay for immersion with their health, and even with their life. But the fatal result not being immediate, it happens with this as with the panaceas of quack doctors, who while promising, and indeed sincerely, impunity and wonderful effects from their treatment, kill in reality a great many people. The fatal results pass unnoticed, enthusiasm is sustained, and dupes multiply notwithstanding. We have seen a woman who, immersed in the river in mid-winter, reached her home with difficulty, forming but one icicle with her frozen garments, and had to be thawed before the fire. She escaped with a violent fever. That Mormon priest will be remembered, who some years since, in attempting to immerse two women in the Trent, drowned them both. Similar cases have occurred in America. But in the heat of victory and conquest, the casualties of the battlefield are passed unnoticed.

In order to give one instance amongst many, we borrow from the recent work on baptism of the Rev. J. Wood, the following incident which happened in his neighborhood. He states that "A young lady was recently immersed in Paris, Can-

ada West, in the winter season, and died shortly afterwards from the effects of it; and her father, after listening to the funeral sermon preached on the occasion,—in which the minister had remarked upon the mysteriousness of Divine Providence in cutting off one so young and promising,—unable to control any longer his indignation, rose and publicly charged him with the death of his daughter!” Another lady, of Baptist principles but in delicate health, who was urged to undergo an iced immersion, declined, unwilling to believe that it was the will of her Saviour she should leap into the very jaws of death for the sake of a ceremony.

§ 35. **Baptism by Immersion is an old Heathen Practice.**— We have said that this zeal for immersion proceeds from a carnal propensity of human nature to exaggerate the figure and overdo the ceremony. Let us add now that this practice is more ancient than Christianity, for it is pagan. The Greek and Roman heathen are perfectly agreed with the Baptists as to the mode of baptism, only we must give them credit for more moderation and less exclusiveness than modern immersionists. For they did not absolutely deny the validity of sprinkling, but were satisfied with underrating it, and devoting that form of baptism to the worship of the infernal deities. To

them, however, immersion was the most genuine form of baptism; it was reserved for Jupiter and the great gods. Heathen and Baptists are thus agreed that immersion is the only baptism worthy of the Supreme God, and that it is indispensable to his worship. (Virgil, *Æn.* II. 719; IV. 635 – 638.) They differed however in this, that the heathen, with correct taste, thought that a religious lustration in a pond, or in a basin, or any stagnant water, was unworthy of deity, and they insisted upon a resort to running water.

*Attrectare nefas; donec me flumine vivo
Abluero.*

(*Æn.* II. 719.)

*ὕδασι ποταμίῳις
ἐλούσατο.*

(Euripides, *Alcest.* 160, 161.)

They understood rightly baptism as a symbol of purification, and considered it just the reverse from purifying to have twelve or more successive immersions of different people, and different sexes, in one basin, with the same unchanged water. Purity, and not defilement, was the object of their religious lustrations.

But whence this strange conformity of feeling and practice between modern Baptists and old heathen? Morally it arose from this love of immersion, which, as we have seen, lies in human

nature ; but historically the Catholic Church borrowed very early this rite from paganism, as well as many other objectionable practices, and the Baptists in turn borrowed immersion from the Papists. Horace informs us that superstitious mothers in Rome made immersion the object of a vow to Jupiter, and that although this baptism performed in winter in the Tiber had often the most fatal consequences, yet there was no falling off in the zeal for immersion. *Delira mater, etc.* (Sat. II. 3. 289.) But here is a most striking instance which we have gathered from the Latin poet Juvenal. Describing the practice of superstitious women, upon whom the priests inflict a penance, he says : “ And in order to make an expiation for the sins of the whole year, having broken the ice in winter, she will go down into the river, will immerse herself three times in the Tiber, and though frightened will dip her head in the very current, will come out of the water shivering, and drag herself home with difficulty through the fields.”

*Et totum semel expiet annum,
Hibernum fracta glacie descendet in amnem,
Ter matutino Tiberi mergetur, et ipsis
Vorticibus timidum caput abluet, etc.*

(Sat. VI. 518 - 521.)

Here is a real Baptist scene drawn from nature, and there is no detail wanting to it ; but this sort

of baptism was practised in Rome before Jesus Christ by heathen, as it continues to be even at the present day by the Hindoos in the Ganges. The Druid priests also conferred a baptism by immersion in the sacred lakes as an initiatory rite. (Keysler, *Antiq.*) It is easy now to see where the Fathers found their immersion, indeed, their triple immersion, which they always practised in honor of the Trinity. It was a means of popularizing baptism amongst a people, pagan, ignorant, and superstitious, to identify it with an old and favorite superstitious practice. This cold immersion through the ice of a river was a meritorious work, a sort of penance; it satisfied, by an act of mortification, the self-righteousness natural to man. On the other hand, the moment that the water of baptism was supposed to possess some miraculous virtue for regenerating, as the Fathers believed, it was but fair to exclaim with Peter: "Not only the feet, but also the hands and the head!" that is to say, the whole body. Let us be just, let us render to Cæsar the things of Cæsar, and baptism by immersion to the heathen, who have practised it long before Jesus Christ, and continue it still in the Ganges.

§ 36. **The Baptism of the Holy Ghost is an Aspersion.** — The water baptism of the Gospel is

very different from the pagan ceremony. It represents in a figure the baptism of the Holy Ghost; but we know that the latter is "poured out and shed" on us. (Acts ii. 18, 33; x. 44; xi. 15, 16.) We are certainly not plunged into the Holy Ghost, although the Baptist version makes John say: "Jesus Christ will immerse you into the Holy Ghost and into fire." (Matt. iii. 11.) Here is at last purgatory introduced into the Bible by Baptists for the benefit of the Romish Church, if the Lord is to give his disciples a plunge into the fire. Scripture, however, teaches us very clearly and very positively that the Holy Ghost came down, was "poured, shed, fell, and sat upon" the heads of the disciples like tongues of fire. (Acts ii. 3.) This was the greatest baptism, only foreshadowed by that of water, and yet it was visibly and figuratively applied to part of their heads alone, and not to the whole body. The Spirit was applied to them, and not they to the Spirit, much less were they thrown down and plunged into the Holy Ghost. In the very same manner the water of baptism must be applied to the candidate, and not the candidate to the water, as do Baptists. (See also Rom. v. 5; Tit. iii. 5, 6; Eph. i. 13.) The Spirit rests upon us, and not we into or under the Spirit; and at the baptism of Jesus, John saw the Spirit "descending and alighting" upon him. Moreover, the blood

of Christ, which washes us from all sins, is it a "blood of sprinkling" or a blood of immersion? (Heb. xii. 24; 1 Pet. i. 2.) And if an aspersion of blood is sufficient to wash us in figure, why should not an aspersion of water be also sufficient? Why insist to be washed by the water more completely than by the blood?

§ 37. **While the Ordinances of the Gospel belong to all, Immersion is to many absolutely and forever impossible.** — As we have already acknowledged, immersion is a difficult, expensive, and often dangerous practice. It cannot generally be performed without very complicated preparations. And if it is impracticable in several climates, under the freezing blasts of the north, as well as in the midst of the droughts of the African desert, or of the steppes of Asia, it is also absolutely impossible in many cases. First of all, for sickly persons, the *clinici* of the Fathers. Baptism is often craved for on a bed of sickness and death, and then few Baptists have the cruelty to deny aspersion as valid. But is this not tantamount to a confession that immersion is not indispensable to the form? Why again excommunicate so many of their brethren for no other reason than that they have been sprinkled instead of immersed? Why this indulgence for those sick in the body, and this severity for those

supposed to be sick intellectually, who, however sincere, cannot succeed in perceiving the command of immersion in the Bible? Is not this the indication of a bad cause, sullied with fanaticism and sectarian spirit? We have already explained the necessity of considerable physical strength in the Baptist minister, to enable him to fulfil his ministry, because, while occupying in the water an unstable position, he has to carry in his arms the heavy load of an inert body. But there are men so corpulent, women of such size, that no Baptist minister could possibly immerse them. Their baptism is beyond the muscular power of man. They cannot be requested to immerse themselves, for immersion is burial, and no dead man can bury himself or even help at his burial; he must remain perfectly passive. Now we ask, Is the kingdom of God only for people of small stature, or must we invent engines to assume the place of the Baptist minister? Why compel all the grenadier body-guard of the Emperor of France, or even the Coldstream Guards of the Queen, to be Pedobaptists? Is not the Gospel intended for all?

§ 38. **Immersion is an Indecency and even a Blasphemy.** — But this is not all. Immersion is a public indecency. Is it proper that a man should take, in public and before a promiscuous congrega-

tion, a young woman in his arms, clasp her apparelled in a loose bathing-dress, plunge her, wipe her, and assist her out of the bath, with her light clothes indecently clinging to her form? Shall they make him believe, who knows ever so little the manners of the East, the immense distance which there separates the sexes, so that a man dares not even look at a woman's face in public, and it would be his death to touch her, — shall they make him believe, we say, that the Apostles would have dared to take by the waist the women of Jerusalem, bathe them with their own hands in the presence of an indignant public, and send them back home, dragging through the streets of Jerusalem their clothes dripping with water? The Apostles would have been immediately stoned by a justly irritated people.

Immersion is not only an act of indecency, but it is also, by implication, a blasphemy. For in that parody of the death of Christ, there cannot be a burial, without also a resurrection, and this the Apostle himself declares. (Rom. vi. 4.) The first man who saw in water-baptism a burial, Menander, disciple of Simon the Magician, consistently taught also that baptism was a resurrection. It is evident that the same person who buries the neophyte raises him up again from the tomb, for he could not be left buried under water even for one moment. In figure he is resuscitated, just as much as he is buried:

The Baptist minister acts then figuratively in the place of God, whom he unwittingly personifies. He takes possession of the candidate, who must become passive; he crucifies him with Christ, he causes him to die, he buries him, and raises him up again with Christ. For it is impossible to carry out only a portion of the figure. Involuntarily the whole pantomime of redemption is acted, if any part is attempted, by a water-burial with Christ. Is not this virtually a blasphemy, from which the evangelical Christian must turn aside with disgust and indignation, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"? No wonder, then, that our reformers should have expressed strong abhorrence for Anabaptism, and should have maintained with Zwingle, that "those who rebaptize crucify Jesus Christ."

§ 39. **Immersion is in Scripture the Symbol of the Divine Curse.** — We could close here our remarks on immersion, for we believe to have shown by a superabundance of proofs that it is not the baptism of the Gospel. But in order to be more complete still, we are anxious to sound Scripture again, to see if immersion is mentioned in any way apart from baptism, and whether some symbolical sense is attributed to it. Now, we shall soon find that the Bible knows immersion, and it

has made of this pagan ceremony the symbol of malediction. The Apostles Peter and Paul have themselves put us in the way of this symbolical meaning, through the contrast between baptism and immersion which their language implies. When Peter speaks to us of the baptism of Noah, and of the eight persons saved in the ark (1 Peter iii. 20, 21), and we inquire what was the mode of this baptism, the response is evidently that they were not plunged in water, but only sprinkled by the rain of heaven which fell upon them. But at the occasion of this baptism, who was immersed? "The world of the ungodly"; they alone were immersed in the waters of the deluge, and immersion was henceforth among the people of God a symbol of malediction. God himself immersed the sinful and perverse race during forty days and forty nights, in reality burying them into the waters of the deluge, whilst he baptized the family of Noah by the sprinkling of heaven. After the same manner Paul teaches us (1 Cor. x. 2) that after the deluge God baptized his people when they passed through the Red Sea. Certainly they were not plunged; the spray of the sea driven by the wind could alone have reached them, and thus baptized them by sprinkling. Who at the time of this baptism was immersed? Pharaoh and his army; God himself immersed them in the Red Sea as a malediction. Moses declares to

us (Ex. xiv. 27, 28) that “the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea, and the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horse-men, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them,” — for they were all immersed, that is to say, drowned. Then follows this beautiful description of the immersion: “Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, The Lord is my salvation. Pharaoh’s chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned (in the Hebrew *immersed*) in the Red Sea. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone. The sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters.” (Ex. xv. 1, 4, 5, 10.)

The New Testament, faithful to this symbolic sense, represents the dragon as pouring water from his mouth like a flood, to immerse the woman who personifies the Church, — that is to say, the believers. (Rev. xii. 15.) It is for the same reason that Jesus Christ himself advises that those who commit offences should be immersed, but not his disciples. (Matt. xviii. 6.) When the confidence of his disciple Peter wavers, then only he inflicts upon him a commencement of immersion, from which his faith saved him in time, otherwise he would have been completely immersed. (Matt. xiv. 30.) The

herd of swine, as soon as they were possessed of the evil spirits, rushed to the sea for immersion. (Matt. viii. 32.) Immersion is thus, in the intention of our Saviour, the wages of unbelief, the punishment of offences, a symbol of malediction.

What perversion of ideas, to wish to replace the sign of the covenant of grace by a type of malediction, and to compel the Christian minister to act the part of the dragon, who, in his hatred towards Jesus Christ, would immerse all believers in the water!

The grave of Jesus Christ belongs to the infidel world, and is reserved to the impenitent sinner; he will be buried with the Son of Man, never to rise again, and this burial is symbolic of the curse of God. But the believer finds "a lively hope only in the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. i. 3), and, obedient to his Master, lets the dead bury their dead.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BAPTISM OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

§ 40. **The Observation of Facts is the Best Method to follow.** — The external and ceremonial form of baptism once decided, our researches ought henceforth to have for an object to reach the hidden meaning of this sacrament, and to determine who are the persons who ought to receive it. Two methods here offer themselves to us. One would consist in ascertaining first the hidden meaning, and then deciding from it who are the proper persons to receive baptism ; this would be regulating the practice by the idea. The other method would take for a starting-point the practice of the Apostles, — would examine facts, class them, and deduce from them the theory. The first method is the most brilliant and also the easiest, but at the same time the most superficial, the one which most favors peculiar ideas, and which serves to support all preconceived theories. The second is more slow and difficult, but much safer, and therefore this is

the one we adopt. It is in the Gospel as it is in nature : from the attentive and critical observation of a great number of facts we draw the most solid conclusions and systems truly based on reality, whilst we go astray when we begin with abstract ideas, with a notion of how a thing should be, to descend thence afterwards to facts, and seek to make the latter fit with a preconceived system. We resume, therefore, our researches by the investigation of a great fact,—the baptism of John the Baptist.

§ 41. **Presumption that the Baptism of John and that of the Apostles form but one.**—Most of the works on Baptism, whatever be their color, seek to establish a fundamental difference between the baptism of John and Christian baptism, — a difference sufficient, they say, in the eyes of the Apostles to lead them to rebaptize those who had already received John's baptism. (Acts xix. 1–5.) Several Baptists, however, have contended that the two baptisms are essentially but one, and we are happy to be able to agree with them on this point. Such also is the opinion of Calvin. To admit that there could have been two baptisms, differing either as to form or to substance, is to place one's self under the impossibility of understanding anything as to Christian baptism. When should one baptism have ceased

and the other begun? Most writers fix this moment at the first Pentecost after the death of Jesus Christ, when the Apostles received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. It would follow that, in what precedes, namely, in the four Gospels, which is to say, the first half of the New Testament, whatever is said in reference to baptism must be understood as that of John, and that we should be confined in our researches upon Christian baptism to the second half of the New Testament. Thus, while the data of the whole book might already seem insufficient to enable us to reach some safe conclusion on Christian baptism, many divines are still willing to throw away half, without thinking that they thus place themselves under the unavoidable necessity of resorting to fancy rather than to facts, if they would reconstruct a doctrine with materials altogether insufficient, incomplete, and of uncertain relation.

But this is not all. It would become necessary then to treat of the two baptisms separately, to write the history of each, showing its beginning and its end. The baptism of John, its mode and idea, should first be well studied, then the Christian baptism subsequent to it should be well contrasted, differences well ascertained, new principles and new rules of practice established for the latter. This is an impossible undertaking, which never has been and never will be accomplished; without which,

however, nothing certain could be decided in reference to the Christian Baptism. As to ourselves, if we were convinced that the baptism of John is different from that of the Apostles, either as to the mode or the meaning, we should lay aside all further researches as a vain attempt, and we should hereafter consider baptism as an impenetrable mystery, which it has been the intention of Scripture to conceal from us. With the Quakers, we would abandon its practice, as wanting Scriptural basis, and fit only to divide Christians.

§ 42. **The Pretended Anabaptism of Paul towards Certain Disciples of John.** — There is then, already, a strong presumption that the two baptisms are identical; let us now change presumption into proof. Only one fact has ever been adduced in support of the opinion that there are two distinct baptisms of water under the Gospel; it is the anabaptism of Paul in reference to the baptism of John: —

“ And it came to pass that Paul came to Ephesus; and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism. Then said

Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them. And all the men were about twelve." (Acts xix. 1-7.)

At first sight, this passage appears very strong, and it seems impossible to escape from the conclusion, that if, after having received the baptism of John, it was still necessary by command of an Apostle to be re-baptized in order to obtain Christian baptism, there must be indeed a radical and fundamental difference between the two baptisms. The conclusion is too logical to be avoided; we do not therefore contest it, but we attack the premises as insufficient. If these disciples were really re-baptized, which the translation affirms, but the original does not, we must say that their first baptism was far from a true baptism of John; it was, on the contrary, so irregular and spurious, that Paul felt bound to consider it as void and of no effect. Let us follow the narrative. We are in the year 55 or 56 of the Christian era; that is to say, over twenty-five years after the death of John the Baptist, and over twenty-two since the foundation of the Christian Church. The Messianic view of the Forerun-

ner has therefore become superannuated and inadmissible ; it belongs to the past, is outshone by new light and does not meet with the creed of the Apostles. A baptism made then in strict accordance to John, namely, to obtain the remission of sins through faith in a Messiah only expected, but not come, is a falsehood ; for the Messiah has come, and such a baptism, in denying it, denies the Gospel. Can such a baptism be valid ? Certainly not. It might have been allowed a quarter of a century earlier, but at this point it was an apostasy against which it was necessary to protest, by holding such baptism as of no account whatever.

This explains why Scripture speaks of these people as being *certain* disciples, which means that they were not some of the disciples, but only spurious disciples, neither Jews nor Christians, an anomaly and an exception. They had not been baptized by John himself, for this is not said, and in that case they would all have been old men. More strange still that these twelve, after having been baptized in Jordan, should all meet together twenty-five years afterwards in Ephesus, and that during a quarter of a century, and through long travels, not one of them should have ever heard aught of the accomplished atonement of Christ, of the Church, and of the Holy Ghost. All this is impossible. For the same reason, these twelve must

have been strangers in the city of Ephesus, and were only recently arrived when Paul met them; otherwise they would have heard of the Christians in the place, and not have remained in such gross ignorance of Christianity. We must therefore admit that these people had just come from some distant locality, that some old disciple of John, still unenlightened, had imparted to them an imperfect doctrine, and that they had been baptized by him against all rules, and even in ignorance of the true principles of John the Baptist. For the latter had himself preached the baptism of the Holy Ghost, the very existence of which was ignored by these twelve, and he had announced the immediate coming of Jesus Christ, whom these pretended disciples did not know either, as is apparent from the language of Paul. A baptism according to John the Baptist, more than twenty-five years after his death, would have been irregular enough, but these "certain disciples" had come very short of even such a baptism. They had virtually received only a religious lustration, having of baptism but the form. The external seal of baptism had been placed on words and doctrines imbued with ignorance and heresy. We should ourselves have declared their baptism void, and re-baptized them. We should re-baptize Mormons, and yet Mormon baptism, implying some knowledge of Christ and the existence of

the Holy Ghost, is vastly superior to the baptism received by the "certain disciples."

All this is still clearer in the original than in the version. It does not affirm that the disciples had believed; it makes rather their faith the object of the question of Paul: "Have you received the Holy Ghost, having believed?" Which amounts to saying: "Have you received the Holy Ghost through faith?" The Apostle neither affirms nor denies that they have believed, but means only that, if they are truly disciples and have believed, they must also have received the Holy Ghost. Their answer shows sufficiently that they have neither the spirit nor the faith, and need to be catechized by Paul. He expresses his astonishment that they should have been baptized at all, by asking, "Unto what" — namely, unto what doctrine — "have you been baptized?" And they answer, "Unto John's baptism," — namely, in professing the doctrines of John.

Calvin does not think that these people were re-baptized with water by Paul, but that their second baptism was only that of the Holy Ghost conferred by the laying on of hands. The original does not bend to this interpretation, for it describes the baptism and the laying on of hands as two successive and distinct acts. But nothing in the text prevents the translation of Beza, Calixtus, and Wolf, who

make the 5th verse the conclusion of the speech of Paul, and read: "John said unto the people that they should believe, etc. and having heard him (John) they (the people) were baptized." According to this reading, there is nothing said in the text about the disciples being re-baptized, but only that hands were laid upon them to obtain the Holy Ghost. We do not indorse this last translation, but it agrees perfectly with the Greek original, and this alone will be sufficient reason why the passage cannot serve as a basis upon which to erect the doctrine of a double baptism of water under the Gospel.

§ 43. **The Spiritual Import of Baptism is susceptible, in the New Testament, of a Gradual and Historical Development.**—We shall be reproached, perhaps, with having implied, in the remarks that precede, a certain difference between the baptism of John and that of the Apostles, even after declaring them identical. Let us, then, explain ourselves. It is only an essential difference between the two baptisms that we deny; but we readily admit a shade. A distinction is to be made, in water baptism, between the form, the subjects who receive it, and the dogmatical idea attached to it. We see between John and the Apostles no difference, either as to form or as to subjects; but as

to the dogmatical idea we acknowledge a difference, if not in the substance, at least in the development; for after the death of Christ, the light on the work of Redemption is much greater than in the days of the Forerunner. But the spiritual idea remains in substance just the same. Both baptisms have regard, 1st. To repentance and conversion; 2d. The remission of sins; 3d. The Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world; 4th. The effusion of the Holy Ghost as the final object to be reached. (Acts ii. 38.) These points are just the same; their developments alone differ. Remission of sin is a doctrine far clearer in the mouth of Paul than in that of John. A crucified Saviour is more than a Lamb of God yet to come; a Holy Ghost present, more than a Holy Ghost promised; but the doctrines and fundamental ideas of both baptisms are identical, they differ only through the circumstances and time of their taking place. Moreover, all this development was not effected suddenly on the day of Pentecost; it was the work of years, and with it progressed also the spiritual import of baptism.

This identity is further proved by other sacraments which have been placed in analogous circumstances of development. "The circumcision of Moses" (Acts xv. 1) was essentially the circumcision of Abraham, and the Lord says so (John vii. 22). But this ceremony, while remaining the same

in substance, the same as to subjects who are to receive it, the same in its innermost idea, was bound after Moses to a far more developed doctrine than in the days of Abraham. Under all circumstances and changes it remained always the sign of the Covenant, but the Covenant itself was undergoing new developments, while the ceremony of initiation remained one and the same, and no one claimed that there were two circumcisions. It would be just as erroneous to conclude for two baptisms, because of the developments which the doctrine of the New Covenant has undergone from the days of John the Baptist to those of the Apostles. On the same principle we should have two Lord's Suppers. The first instituted by the Lord himself, previous to his death and the establishment of the Church, and celebrated in view of a coming sacrifice; while we take now the Lord's Supper in remembrance of a sacrifice already accomplished. It recalls to our minds details of the crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord; it evokes a whole circle of ideas which existed but in germ at the time of its first celebration. This sacramental ceremony has undergone, therefore, no change in the form, but some in its hidden meaning, has received spiritual developments at least as considerable as those of the baptism of water, yet it is always the same holy supper, as it is also always the same baptism.

§ 44. **The whole History of Baptism, from John the Baptist to Paul, shows its Unity and Identity.** — A rapid glance at the history of John's baptism, from its beginning until the time when it is supposed to have made room for a new baptism, will confirm us still more as to its identity with that conferred by the Apostles after Pentecost. Let us first remark that this name, "Baptism of John," is imparted to it in the Gospel, from its origin, and before the existence of Christian baptism proper. (Luke vii. 29; Matt. xxi. 25.) What could this expression mean, since this baptism "was not really of John, but of heaven"? The name must undoubtedly have been given, to distinguish it from the other water baptisms which existed before, and were practised according to the law of Moses. The baptism of John did not differ from these as to the form, but was specifically another, by a spiritual sense more developed; it was a baptism of repentance. John, as prophet, was the first to introduce it and practise it, and hence its appellation.

This baptism came, then, from heaven, and, notwithstanding the name the people gave it, it was not the human invention of John; he teaches us so himself, when he says, "He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said to me," etc. (John i. 33.) But is it credible that God, to introduce the New Covenant, should have needed two dis-

tinct and successive water-baptisms; that he should have instituted one, that of John, to last just six months, or at most three years and a half, until the Pentecost? It would be without precedent in the rest of Revelation that the Lord should have instituted such an ephemeral sacrament, such a short-lived ceremony, and it is unworthy of the Almighty to suppose such volatility in his counsels.

Jesus Christ arrives on the scene, and his disciples begin also to baptize, and their baptism is performed under the responsibility of Jesus as being his own baptism. (John iv. 1, 2.) "The Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples." Nothing points out then the slightest difference between the baptism of John and the baptism of Jesus and his disciples. On the contrary, the disciples of John are jealous of the great number of baptisms performed by those of Jesus (John iii. 26; iv. 1), and their master does not reply, that with the same external form another new baptism is conferred, which they cannot perform, but his answer implies that there was but one and the same water-baptism for the two parties. Therefore it is generally granted that the baptism practised by the disciples of Jesus before his death was precisely the same as that of John, and that first at Pentecost was the transition to the new baptism made.

Neither does Scripture place the ministry of John and his baptism outside of the New Covenant and as antecedent to it, but it considers them as integral parts of the Christian dispensation, as its beginning, its starting-point. This is set forth by several declarations. In Luke iii. 18, we are told by the original, "John the Baptist *evangelized* to the people." He who evangelizes is on the same ground with the Apostles, and belongs, with them, to the Gospel dispensation. When the Apostles make choice of one to replace Judas, it is required that the new Apostle should have been a witness of all the facts of the new economy, "beginning from the baptism of John." (Acts i. 22.) Peter also places the baptism of John as the first fact of Christianity (Acts x. 37), and Paul does the same (Acts xiii. 24).

When Jesus Christ gave the holy supper to his disciples, they had then been baptized with no other baptism than that of John, and had there been two baptisms, the holy supper would have preceded Christian baptism, instead of the latter serving as initiation. When, after his resurrection, Jesus gave to his disciples the order to go forth and baptize the nations, — Christian baptism not having begun yet, — the order should have been : "Do not henceforth baptize with the same baptism which you have hitherto practised, but use a new water-baptism." There is of course, no trace of such an important change,

and it is revolting to Christian feeling to think that the Apostles should have successively practised two baptisms, and led into error the people and future ages by retaining absolutely the same form for a ceremony essentially different. When Jesus is about ascending to heaven, he imparts to the disciples his last instructions, and they refer to baptism. (Acts i. 5.) He repeats to them, after John the Baptist, that there are two baptisms, that of water, and that of the Holy Ghost. The first they had already received from John; the second alone was yet to come, and the Lord does not mention a third as also coming. To him, the baptism of John is the baptism of water. He does not make the slightest allusion to a Christian water-baptism different from that. It would have been a new institution, of the origin and character of which no trace has been left, and of which Jesus Christ has not said a single word, at the very moment when he is supposed to have introduced it. The Pentecost comes, and with it the baptism of the Holy Ghost, so often promised, and which the twelve are the first to receive. Are then the Apostles re-baptized with water? Not one. They never receive this pretended Christian baptism. The baptism of John is their only water-baptism. Apollos also, who had received John's baptism, is not re-baptized when converted and brought over to a full knowledge of

the Gospel. (Acts xviii. 26.) Finally, the difference which was thought by some to exist between the two water-baptisms, inasmuch as the Christian one conferred the gift of the Holy Ghost, does not really exist, for the Holy Ghost was not obtained at baptism, but only afterwards by a distinct operation, namely, the laying on of hands. Indeed, the Christian water-baptism conferred by Philip on the Samaritans (Acts viii. 12) did not impart to them aught more than John's baptism. It was necessary that two Apostles, Peter and John, should come down expressly from Jerusalem, some time later, to add to their baptism of water, and through prayer (ver. 14), the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

Thus, by following up the history of the baptism of water, from John the Baptist until after the foundation of the Church, we can nowhere find a point of transition to help us from one baptism to another. All that has been said on the existence of these two baptisms and their point of transition is mere hypothesis, without even the shadow of a proof. While, on the contrary, Jesus Christ and his Apostles, neither through their words nor through their practice, ever acknowledge but one baptism of water, which Scripture calls the baptism of John, and which continues up to this day. Those who, like Apollos, knew nothing but the baptism of John, knew in fact nothing but the

baptism of water, that is to say, the rudiments of the Gospel, what belongs to its initiation. In our subsequent researches, therefore, we shall look upon as synonymous expressions these Scriptural words, "baptism of John" and "baptism of water"; and we shall gather from the whole New Testament, beginning with John the Baptist, our data upon water-baptism, its mode, the subjects that are to receive it, and its spiritual meaning.

CHAPTER V.

BAPTISM BEFORE FAITH.

§ 45. **Necessity of a Progress of both Parties in the Question of Baptism.** — Having already expressed our conclusions on the form of baptism, and having recognized besides that under the new dispensation there is but one water-baptism, namely, that of John, the time has come now to turn our investigations towards the class of persons upon whom it should be conferred. This is an apple of discord between the Evangelical Christians of the day. The minority, the Baptists, have inscribed on their flag the device, “The baptism of believers alone,” and have excluded infants from all participation in this ceremony. The majority, the Pedobaptists, accept in full the Baptist device as to adults, but reject it as to infants, for they baptize generally no adults except believers, but baptize also infants, who, whatever might be said to the contrary, do not believe at all. Thus it is the relation held by water-baptism to faith which

is differently understood by the two parties, upon which they cannot agree, and for which they war together, and often excommunicate each other. Such serious and prolonged disagreement between sincere Christians sufficiently indicates that here lies a difficulty which has not yet received a perfectly satisfactory solution. It must be therefore allowable for any Bible-Christian to seek one, even were it different from that of either of the two opposing parties. The apparent novelty of an explanation ought not to deter, provided it springs from Scriptural facts. For if unity is ever reached on this question, it will not be by holding each exclusively to the formulas of his own party, but rather by trying new paths, which may lead to some modification of the usual theories of baptism. We have endeavored to contribute for our own part to this result, and, the better to study unfettered the facts imparted by Scripture, we have begun by laying aside all former notions, both Baptist and Pedobaptist, so as to reach independent conclusions. The result has led us, it is true, to the Pedobaptist practice, but at the same time to a doctrine which is strictly that of neither Baptists nor Pedobaptists.

§ 46. **The only Three Opinions possible on the Relation of Baptism to Faith.**—The rela-

tion of baptism to faith can offer but three alternatives: — 1st. BAPTISM ALWAYS AFTER FAITH; this is the Baptist opinion. 2d. BAPTISM BEFORE AND AFTER FAITH, — before for the children and after for the adults; this is the Pedobaptist opinion. 3d. BAPTISM ALWAYS BEFORE FAITH. This last is our opinion, which happens to be neither Baptist nor Pedobaptist, but upon which alone we think that the practice of infant baptism can obtain a solid foundation. The Baptist opinion, as can be seen at a glance, enjoys, as well as ours, perfect simplicity and clearness. It has in this a great advantage over the Pedobaptist opinion, which is complex, and implies an evident contradiction. Why adopt two rules acting inversely to each other, — baptism always after faith for adults, and baptism always before faith for infants? Moreover, there is between infancy and manhood an age of transition for which the double rule operates very badly, becomes uncertain, and is practicable only through an arbitrary choice. The consequence is, that, to many logical minds, Pedobaptism appears as a doctrine full of contradictions, uncertainties, and arbitrariness, and this feeling drives them, often with regret, but through conscientiousness, logical consistency, and need of certainty, into the Baptist idea, which appears to them alone satisfactory. The finger must be laid on the weak

spot; it is useless and dangerous to cherish any longer illusions. The constant going over to Baptist principles of excellent men and conscientious ministers is a fact very serious, but not without a cause which calls for a remedy. It is Pedobaptism in its present shape which brings forth Anabaptism, leads to it, and will continue to operate in the same direction, until it has revised its own doctrine, in order to rest its practice on better foundations than heretofore. This adoption of two contradictory rules in reference to the subjects of baptism, and the arbitrary practice which follows, are the cause that the Pedobaptist doctrine is so vague, so difficult to grasp, and so unsatisfactory to minds in want of clear and definite notions. Such vagueness does not only give a vantage-ground to Baptist principle, but it also spoils Pedobaptism, and brings it into confusion and misty error. The shelter afforded by vagueness, combined with the love of tangible notions, explain why so many mystical and superstitious ideas are connected with infant baptism, assimilating it more or less to a sacramental miracle, and thus creating in the bosom of many Evangelical Christians an aversion for the practice.

But we are anticipating conclusions which must result from the study of facts. Let us therefore begin by a scrupulous examination of all the cases of baptism related in the New Testament, and let

the question be asked before each, separately, "Did the ceremony take place before or after faith?" We can thus show how we have been forcibly led to adopt the opinion which we profess. To prevent all misunderstanding, however, let it be first well understood that in our definition we mean by *faith* precisely what the Baptists mean, not mere external assent, not historical faith, but the faith that saves, justifying faith; that which Baptists require for admission to both Baptism and the Lord's Supper. This being well understood, we say that the Apostles have always and invariably conferred baptism before justifying faith. And if we make good this point, it follows of necessity that the whole Baptist practice must be rejected as anti-Biblical.

§ 47. **The Baptism of John was not a Baptism of Believers but of the Unconverted.** — The first baptisms performed under the new dispensation, are those of John the Baptist. They were very numerous, and also, with the exception of that of Jesus Christ, very uniform. He baptized immense crowds, for "Jerusalem and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan, went out to him and were baptized of him." (Matt. iii. 5, 6.) This number, as we have already shown while treating of immersion (§ 26), must have reached about half a million. We would, however, be satisfied for

our argument with ten thousand, and even much less. Now did John baptize these people after faith, or, what comes to the same, were this crowd, these five hundred thousand, believers? Much thought is not needed to enable one to answer with the most entire confidence, No! These were not all believers. Had they been converted, the Lord would not have called them a little later a perverse and adulterous generation; he would not have grieved that there were so many called and so few chosen; he would not have been crucified by this very people of Jerusalem, who had flocked to receive the baptism of John; and, three years after the death of the Fore-runner, the first Christian church would not have been composed of a mere handful of disciples, gathered in an upper chamber, but the whole country would have risen at the call of the Apostles, and the land have been rapidly covered with Christian churches. But the result shows, beyond all cavil, that the baptism of John, that is to say, the baptism of water, was not a baptism of believers; and if it was not so then, it never became such afterwards, for otherwise it would have been an entirely new sacrament, entirely different from the former, which would be contrary to Scripture.

§ 48. **The Baptized of John gave only an External Assent to his Preaching.**— It will then be

asked, If not believers, whom then did John baptize? The Gospel tells us that they were people who repented, or rather professed repentance, who confessed their sins, in reference to the near coming of the Messiah. (Matt. iii.) This confession of sins did not enter into the details of the private life of each individual, for the ministry of John would not have been equal to it, and besides it would have been an anticipated Romanism. It was a general confession of impurity and of the need which man has to be washed of his sins by Divine mercy, in order to partake of the kingdom of heaven. Such a general confession is obtained still, at the present day, without much difficulty, and very sincerely, from the great mass of men. They recognize willingly enough the truth of the Gospel and the supremacy of Jesus Christ. They confess that they are sinners, that they need salvation and purification from their sins. It is doubtless an important confession, a basis for the preaching of the Gospel; but, nevertheless, those who make it are far from being converted, far from being believers, in the exalted and spiritual sense attached to this word. Had John limited his baptism to believers alone, to those who gave proof of conversion and of a change of heart, he would not have found fifty persons to baptize, perhaps not even twelve, instead of half a million. Those baptized by John, taken as

a whole, were certainly neither more enlightened, nor nearer the kingdom of heaven, than the mass of nominal Christians who crowd into our Protestant churches. It was a people of the called, but not of the chosen. And yet the disciples partake of the Holy Supper, at the hands of the Lord, when they had received no other external initiation to the Church than this multitudinous baptism of John. With the exception of Judas, they had doubtless become believers; otherwise the Lord would not have given them the Supper; but their faith had followed, and not preceded, their baptism.

§ 49. **Jesus receives the Baptism of Water before that of the Holy Ghost.**— With the crowd, and coming one of the last (Luke iii. 21), Jesus Christ presents himself to John to be baptized. The Forerunner is awed at the thought of baptizing the Messiah. “He forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus said unto him, Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.” There can be no talk here of a baptism before or after faith; for Jesus, having never sinned, did neither repent nor believe. His baptism, like his circumcision, and like his observance of the Pass-over, is a “righteousness,” which it becometh him to fulfil, because he is the Son of Man, and must

serve as a model to man in the accomplishment of religious duties. Besides, inasmuch as he participated in human nature, which is defiled, it was becoming that he should receive in his flesh the external sign of purification. But even in his baptism, it was his intention to impart to his disciples and to future ages a great lesson, namely, that the baptism of water must precede the baptism of the Holy Ghost. "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Such, then, is the instruction which Jesus gives us through his baptism;—the unction of the Spirit and the adoption of the Father bestowed after the baptism of water. This instruction of the Lord has been set at naught by the Baptists; for they teach that the unction of the Spirit and adoption must precede their baptism, and they baptize only the believer who has received already the Spirit and adoption.

And let no attempt be made to lessen the value of this instruction by claiming that the Spirit of God is here put to signify the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, for these were not known until after Pentecost. This Spirit of God received after

water-baptism was the same Spirit which led Jesus into the wilderness (Matt. iv. 1), and certainly it was not the gifts that led him away, but the Spirit as a person, or at least a divine influence. The Spirit of the Father spoke in the disciples before Pentecost (Matt. x. 20). The miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost were represented by tongues of fire, while the Spirit as a person, the sanctifying Spirit, came under the winged, celestial, and personal figure of a dove. The Spirit of truth, the Comforter, does not consist exclusively in one of his external manifestations, namely, extraordinary gifts, but in that Spirit which receives every man who believes. (John iii. 5; vii. 39.) If any man have not this Spirit of Christ, he is none of his (Rom. viii. 9), and nevertheless all Christians had not received spiritual gifts. This is the Spirit which is shed in our hearts, with which we are sealed, which is the earnest of our redemption, and which is received only after faith. "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit." "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." "By one Spirit are we all baptized, and we have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (Eph. i. 13; iv. 30; 1 Cor. xii. 13.) This same Spirit which is imparted to the believer was undoubtedly with Jesus from the beginning, but he received it in

an official and ostensible manner only after the baptism of water. Immediately after, but not before.

§ 50. **The Multitudinous Baptisms of Jesus Christ.** — The numerous baptisms of John are followed by the baptisms of Jesus Christ, administered through his disciples. But it is ever the same multitudinous baptism, conferred upon people who have not saving faith, but only repent and give an external adherence to the preaching of the Gospel. Thus, the disciples of John complain that “Jesus baptizeth, and all men come to him.” Again, “the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John.” (John iii. 26; iv. 1, 2.) Which does not mean that in total Jesus had baptized more people than John, which would be impossible, but that, at the time when Jesus entered on his ministry, the crowd which continued coming to be baptized had divided itself between John and Jesus, and that the Lord was beginning to receive the preference, baptizing then more people than John. But it was exactly the same baptism, baptism of the multitude, national baptism. John the Baptist preached very severely to them, calling them “generation of vipers”; but for all that it is not seen that in a single instance he had refused baptism to any one who wanted it.

We must not be surprised, therefore, in seeing several of these new disciples, after they have been baptized and have followed the Lord for some time, grow cold and abandon him. The Lord himself was saying to those he had admitted to baptism, "But there are some of you that believe not." (John vi. 64–66.) For he knew from the beginning which were those amongst the baptized that would believe, and which that would persevere in their incredulity, notwithstanding their baptism. (See also xi. 15.) The fact is, that the ministry of the Lord was spent in preaching the Gospel to these unconverted masses, which had been baptized with water, but not with the Holy Ghost, and which it was necessary, after their baptism, to urge to believe. The first of the Apostles, Peter, had himself been baptized while in an unconverted state, and it is only long after, that the first germ of true faith was exhibited by him. (Matt. xvi. 16.) Therefore was the Lord saying to him long after his baptism, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." (Luke xxii. 32.)

We reach thus the death of our Saviour, and even to Pentecost, without meeting in the Gospel any other baptism than that of the masses and the unconverted. Of the large numbers who listened to the preaching, the avowed enemies of the Lord alone—namely, some Pharisees and lawyers—

were not baptized ; and yet they were not excluded, but they voluntarily abstained. (Luke vii. 30 ; xx. 1 - 7.) “ They did not believe him, and they were not baptized ” ; that is to say that they gave no adherence to the preaching of the Gospel, and through this absence of baptism, through this refusal of formal assent, “ they rejected the counsel of God against themselves.” These unconverted, however, who caused themselves to be baptized, were certainly well-disposed people, who experienced religious wants, who felt themselves drawn towards the Gospel ; they would not otherwise have taken the trouble to proceed as far as the desert, to listen there to the preaching of John and of the Lord, and they would not have consented to receive baptism.

§ 51. **The Three Thousand baptized after Pentecost were of the Called, and not of the Chosen.** — We have thus far found all the practice of John the Baptist, and all that of the Lord, not only different from that of the Baptists, but just the reverse. It is even impossible to imagine a more flagrant contradiction. But perhaps the Apostles have taken the lead, and given the example in this subversion, and have hastened, after the death of their Master, to undo his work, to contradict his principles, and to re-baptize after faith those whom

he had baptized before they were truly converted. Let us see.

At the first baptism performed after Pentecost, the Apostles baptize no less than three thousand at one time, and in a single afternoon. (Acts ii. 41.) Here is certainly the same multitudinous baptism as that of John the Baptist and of the Lord; there can be no mistake about it. The circumstances attendant upon this mass baptism are, for the Baptist point of view, still more aggravating than all previously related. It was a multitude of people who had gathered together in the street during the forenoon, and those in part strangers (ver. 6 - 11). Some had come through curiosity, others to mock (ver. 12, 13). Then Peter preaches unto them the Gospel, denounces their unbelief and hard-heartedness, and reproaches them twice with being the murderers of Jesus Christ (ver. 23 and 36). The heart of these people is moved, and they ask what they shall do, for they have as yet no knowledge of the Gospel, except what they have just heard, and can express but a vague feeling of acceptance of what Peter has said. The Apostle urges them to be baptized immediately, not because they have believed and possess the faith that saves, for on the contrary he has just told them, "Be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins." (ver. 38). He places the remission of sins, or what comes to

the same, saving faith, after baptism, and puts before only the desire of pardon, for which a feeble germ of repentance is sufficient. The order of the Apostle runs thus : 1st, Repent, that is, desire to do better ; 2d, Be baptized ; 3d, After baptism, strive to obtain the remission of your sins by believing ; 4th, After faith, if so be that you believe, you shall certainly receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. This all is contained in verse 38, and the place assigned by the Apostle to the baptism of water in the work of regeneration, is placed between external assent and saving faith, as an intermediary, which aids in passing from one to the other.

Happily, the narrative of this first baptism after Pentecost has been made to us in so detailed and complete a manner, that we may arrive at conclusions which surpass in certainty those drawn from subsequent and less circumstantial narrations of baptism. Thus the text imparts to us an additional light upon the religious character of these three thousand, by telling us (ver. 41) that “ all who received his word gladly ” were baptized. The subjects of the baptism of the Apostles are there very clearly determined, for Scripture designedly makes use of an expression explained by Jesus Christ himself at length, and which leaves no room for doubt. In Matt. xiii. he depicts, under the form of the Parable of the Sower, all those who listen to the

word, and arranges them in several classes. First, we must carefully distinguish those who listen to the word from those who do not listen to it, either from indifference or from aversion. Those who listen are those who feel themselves drawn by the preaching of the Gospel, and who receive it favorably; these are evidently the three thousand baptized of our text "who had gladly received the word" which Peter had addressed to them. Now the Saviour says that, amongst those who listen to the word, there are some who "receive it" as seed cast by the wayside; it does not long remain, the fowls devour it. Others receive it in stony places; "they hear the word, and receive it with joy" (ver. 20), precisely like the three thousand; but it has no root, and soon are these disciples offended. Others still receive the word amongst thorns. Others, finally, receive the word into a good ground, and it bears fruit; but this is by far the smaller number, for, says the Lord, there are many called, but few chosen. Our three thousand have then most certainly received a baptism of calling, but not a baptism of faith and conversion. There is not, in these three thousand baptisms, the shadow of a trace of Baptist discipline. An hour before their baptism, these were hardened hearts whom Peter reproaches with having crucified the Lord. Many are moved, and listen with compunction to this severe preach-

ing, and immediately, without examination, without delay, without individual confession, without personal acquaintance, the Apostles hasten to baptize these assassins of Jesus Christ. They baptize unknown men; they baptize all who present themselves, without refusal and without selection. Their sincerity is not put into question, for it is sufficiently proved from the fact that they offer themselves to baptism, and the act of the ceremony is of itself a confession of sin and a repentance, expressed in symbolical language, more powerful still than words. He who causes himself to be washed publicly with water testifies sufficiently by this very act to his impurity. What a contrast with Baptist and even with Pedobaptist practice! If the Apostles had at least postponed this baptism to the morrow, if they had but waited one day to collect information on the faith of these new disciples, or at least to be sure that their compunction would last twenty-four hours! But no, they make haste, and whosoever wishes receives baptism. And, on this very day, three thousand are added, not to the Church, but simply to the number of disciples (ver. 41). Such only were added to the Church as believed unto salvation (ver. 47).

§ 52. **Mass Baptism of Unconverted Samaritans who believe, but not unto Salvation.—**

After this detailed recital of the first baptism which followed Pentecost, there is no mention made of baptisms in the narrative of the Acts of the Apostles until that of the Samaritans (Acts viii.). But this second apostolic baptism is quite as multitudinous as the first, and still more so if possible. Philip preaches in the city of Samaria to crowds, who are quite attentive, and listen to him especially because they saw him perform miracles (ver. 6). Then these crowds "believe," not in Jesus Christ nor to salvation, but "they believe Philip, Philip preaching," which means that they put confidence in the preaching of Philip, give to it a certain assent. Then they are all baptized in a mass (ver. 12), both men and women. The still carnal character of these people, their ignorance, the nature of their belief, and their unconversion, may be judged of from the fact that Simon Magus also believed, was also baptized, and was the most zealous of these new disciples; "he continued with Philip, and wondered" (ver. 13). And nevertheless he had not yet repented, his heart was not right, and he had no part with the Lord (ver. 20 - 23). These people had been baptized for some time, and yet not one of them had received the Holy Ghost. It became necessary to pray for them, and the missionary toil of the Apostles was also indispensable before they could receive this precious unction (ver. 14 - 17).

§ 53. **The Condition exacted at the Baptism of the Eunuch is not Authentic.** — At last we meet with a baptism which appears to form an exception to the rule, and which is even the strongest argument of the Baptists to prove that baptism should be administered only after faith; it is that of the eunuch by Philip. “The eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? and Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And Philip baptized him.” (Acts viii. 36 – 38.) Let us first remark, that after having established the rule followed by John the Baptist, then by Jesus Christ, and then by the Apostles, in more than five hundred thousand baptisms, the exception of a single baptism could not have great weight. But happily the exception is not one, and, as we shall soon see, it comes perfectly under the general rule of baptism before faith.

First, the entire 37th verse, which contains this, “If thou believest, thou mayest,” is wanting in all the old and best manuscripts, without exception. In the small number of modern manuscripts where it is found, the passage is full of variations, which show plainly that it is a late addition made to the text by the Fathers, who did not like to see the eunuch baptized without making first a confession

of faith. All the revisers of the canon are unanimous for rejecting this spurious sentence, which is certainly not inspired. Now, the passage, were it only doubtful, is, by this very fact, not such as might serve for a basis upon which to build a doctrine in opposition to the rest of the Bible.

Perhaps some will cry out at this, as if, with an impious hand, for the sake of Pedobaptism, we dared to touch the sacred text. But we will promptly impose silence. Let criticism be trampled upon, let the authority of manuscripts be denied, let the revisers be discarded, but let at least the voice of a Baptist, eminent through faith and science, be heard. The learned English theologian, Benjamin Wills Newton, in a quite recent work against Pedobaptism, suppresses completely this verse 37, and says: "I omit the intervening verse, viz. 'And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart,' etc., because it is universally admitted that the whole of this verse is an interpolation. Nor would the Scripture so speak. If such words were found in the Scripture, weak believers might long torment themselves with the question, whether they believed *with all their heart*. The Scripture is very careful never to represent justifying faith as any thing else than simple reliance," etc. (Newton on Baptism, I. 9.)

§ 54. **There is an Assenting Faith and a Justifying Faith; and the Eunuch believes as Simon Magus believed.** — If, in spite of such testimonies, it was absolutely insisted to retain the spurious verse in the Word of God, on the sole authority of the version, then we must be permitted to observe that the controverted passage is far from sufficient to prove a case of baptism after faith. For indeed Scripture takes the word “believe” in more acceptations than one. It is applied not only to saving faith, but also very frequently to that external assent which people often give to the preaching of the Gospel, without being regenerated, and frequently also to simple confidence in the testimony of another. Peter believed with saving faith (Matt. xvi. 16), Judas with assenting faith (John ii. 11). Charity believes everything, but the disciples did not believe Mary Magdalene; and upon such belief or unbelief does not depend the change of heart. This assenting faith, which precedes justifying faith but is not the same, is often characterized in the Gospel. “When Jesus was in Jerusalem, many believed in his name, but Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men.” (John ii. 23, 24.) His disciples believe on him at Cana (ver. 11), but they are far from having the true faith; and it is not until three years later (ver. 22) that they believe unto salvation. This explains

also why, when "many had believed on him," Jesus said to those Jews which believed on him, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." (John viii. 30, 31.) But soon after, these very same believers would kill Jesus, who calls them the children of the devil, and with difficulty escapes from the stones they cast at him (ver. 37, 44, 59). Elsewhere, again, we are told that "many believed on him, but did not confess him, for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." (John xii. 42.) But why seek instances elsewhere than in the very same chapter where is recorded the baptism of the eunuch, or from another witness than Philip himself. The eunuch "*believes*" through Philip; very well, but Simon Magus "*believed*" also first through Philip (Acts viii. 13). Both are baptized by Philip on the same professions. What the faith of Simon Magus was, we know perfectly; and unless Philip has suddenly and arbitrarily changed his practice, we know that he did not exact from the eunuch a different faith. It is clear as noonday that in neither case was it a baptism after justifying faith, but only after the first external assent to the preaching of the Gospel.

§ 55. **The First Baptism of a Heathen is performed without Witnesses, with Hesitancy but**

also with Precipitation.— But this is not all. The eunuch is the very first heathen baptized under the Gospel, just as Cornelius was the second. Hitherto Jews only had been baptized, the Apostles had not turned yet to the Gentiles; and it will be recollected after what hesitations, what scruples of conscience, they decided to do so. There is therefore nothing astonishing, nothing contrary to rule, if in these first two baptisms of Gentiles there has been some delay, some hesitancy, some greater caution as to the sincerity and earnestness of the candidates; indeed, it would be astonishing had it been otherwise.

For the rest, the baptism of the eunuch is a most precipitous baptism, without premeditation or even a moment for reflection; as soon as first thought of, it is also done, and is in every respect opposed to Baptist practice. Only an instant before his baptism he has heard for the first time Biblical instruction on Jesus. A ray of light has glided into the mind of that pagan, which overjoys him; for, a few moments before, he was reading the Prophets, without understanding aught of what they meant concerning the Messiah. He is seized with the desire of receiving baptism, but Philip hesitates for a while, for he has not at heretofore to deal with a circumcised Jew, but with a Gentile. This “If thou believest, thou mayest,” if authentic, would then indicate a concession made for the first time to a

Gentile, but on condition of a special assurance of sincerity and earnestness. Had he applied to be circumcised instead of baptized, a Jewish priest would have enacted the same condition without its implying aught against the circumcision of infants. Finally, should any one, in spite of all preceding evidence, persist in seeing here a baptism after faith, he cannot certainly deny that what must have rendered the baptism such is a delay of a very few minutes only, caused by the hesitation of Philip; for just a moment before, the eunuch ignored all concerning the kingdom of heaven. A baptism performed under such circumstances forms no exception to the rule which we have laid down.

§ 56. **The First Public Baptism of a Heathen is that of Cornelius; here is again some Hesitation followed by Precipitation.**—The baptism of Cornelius (Acts x.) resembles very much that of the eunuch. Philip had baptized the first Gentile. But this had taken place in the desert,—without witnesses and through a special revelation. The eunuch had proceeded afterwards to his own country, without presenting himself amongst the disciples at Jerusalem. The fact was therefore still unknown to them; and besides, Philip had not the preponderating influence of Peter to make them accept a doubtful baptism. It is now the first of

the Apostles who will be called to baptize Gentiles in a public manner, and for the first time to acknowledge some of them officially as disciples. But how strong were his prejudices, and how great his fear of compromising the cause! The whole chapter is explaining how he is led gradually to baptize heathens. First, a special revelation of God teaches him that earnest and sincere pagans are not defiled as unclean animals. Then comes a new revelation of the Spirit, to make him accept the invitation, and follow, doubting nothing, the three pagan messengers. For greater precaution, he requests a certain number of Jewish brethren to accompany him; he imparts to them and to the assembled heathen his reasons for venturing even to preach the Gospel to Gentiles. He speaks to these heathens of the baptism which John preached, but does not dare commit himself in recommending them to be baptized in order to obtain the remission of sins, which he never failed to do when preaching to the Jews. He waits for a new manifestation from above before he offers to baptize them. God then operates before him and before the brethren a miraculous demonstration, which must overcome their reluctance and remove all their conscientious scruples in reference to baptizing Gentiles. By anticipation and for a time he imparts to them the gifts of the Holy Ghost, causing them to speak with tongues and to

magnify God. All the brethren must then be convinced. Peter feels that he cannot refuse them baptism any longer, since the Spirit has already forestalled effects which follow this ordinance. However, he yields to this conclusion only with extreme caution. He first questions the brethren, "Can any man forbid water?" (ver. 47), and they not objecting, and consenting tacitly to share in the responsibility, he grants to Gentiles the baptism of water, which after this precedent will be hereafter granted to them sooner and without any hesitation, as being a public act of renouncing paganism and professing to seek in Christ the remission of sins.

It must be granted that in this baptism of Cornelius there is an exception to the universal rule of the baptism of water before that of the Holy Ghost. But the exception has its motives clear and strong, and therefore only confirms the rule. For the rest, let us reduce this exception to its exact dimensions, which will prove very small. First, nothing shows that every one of these heathen had been thoroughly converted during the few moments or hours while the address of Peter lasted. The gift of the Holy Ghost which fell suddenly on all present (ver. 44) must be considered as a new miraculous manifestation added to those of the day previous. It did not imply a change of heart and a complete work of regeneration; they had still to

seek and obtain the remission of sins, in view of which water-baptism was conferred upon them as it had been by the same Apostle on the three thousand (Acts ii. 38): "Repent and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins." But according to the Baptist view, not one was baptized by the Apostle unless he was a believer and had experienced saving faith. This is tantamount to conferring upon Peter a most wonderful magical power of saving souls, as it were by an electrical shock. When he begins to speak, he has before him an audience of heathen who know as yet nothing about the Gospel; a moment after, they are all believers, regenerated and saved, yea, all and every one of them at the same time. If not, if there was a single exception, this baptism was not that of believers, and the Baptist doctrine crumbles. But even supposing the impossibility that this miraculous "falling" of the Holy Ghost on all present be tantamount to a true conversion of each, it must be conceded then that the exception to the universal rule of baptism before faith has consisted only in the delay of baptism by a few minutes,—delay caused not by a principle, but by the necessity of exceptional circumstances, and sufficiently explained through the scruples of Peter and other Jewish brethren present. As soon as he is convinced that he has used unnecessary delay, the

Apostle commands and hurries the baptism of all his heathen listeners (ver. 47 and 48).

It was not, however, without some good grounds that Peter had hesitated, for the report of his visit to Cesarea and of a baptism conferred upon heathen caused a lively sensation in the Church at Jerusalem (Acts xi. 1–18). He is accused of having violated the established rules. He is compelled to justify himself by stating in detail how he was led to assume this responsibility, and produces as witnesses of the whole occurrence the six brethren that accompanied him (ver. 12). The Church at last officially indorses this baptism of Gentiles, and “holding their peace, glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.” Repentance alone justifies in the eyes of the Church this baptism of heathens, and places it in agreement with the established practice. A miraculous and anticipated baptism of the Holy Ghost had compelled in this case that of water, which from legal prejudice was in danger of being withheld.

§ 57. **Paul, Lydia, the Jailer, and others are baptized in great haste upon the first Assent given to the Gospel, and are taught only after being baptized.**—The baptisms which now follow in the narrative of the Acts cannot delay us long,

for they all bear the same character. They all take place before faith, or are simultaneous with it, but never posterior to it. First comes Paul's baptism. (Acts ix. 19.) When Ananias was sent to him, he was only overwhelmed, distressed and praying for mercy; he was not converted. Ananias is sent on a special mission by Jesus, to declare to him the counsel of God, that he might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost. Then the use of his senses is first restored to him, then he rises, and then before he is allowed to eat anything, although fasting since three days, he is first baptized (ver. 18), and only after baptism will he eat, recruit his strength, and last of all be taught. Here, as everywhere, we meet with this remarkable haste in the performance of baptism, which is always conferred on the very first mark of an external assent to the preaching of the Gospel, and without allowing a moment for consideration on the part of either the baptized or the baptizer. This extraordinary haste will have to be carefully investigated a little later, if we are to understand the true nature of baptism, for it is probably the most striking fact connected with it, though the least noticed; but we must be content for the present with its being well authenticated for future reference.

Afterwards comes the baptism of Lydia. She listens to an address of Paul, and "the Lord opened

her heart, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." (Acts xvi. 14, 15.) Thus far, there is no evidence on her part of anything more than interest and attention paid to the things spoken by Paul; but this is quite sufficient; they hasten to baptize her, and not only her, but also all her household, which appears either to have paid no attention, or not even to have listened at all. In the text the household is intentionally left out as to the report of change of heart and attention to the preaching of Paul. Lydia alone experiences this. But her household is not left out in baptism; willing or unwilling, interested or not, they are baptized with the head of the family. There is no indication of Lydia having believed so as to experience a change of heart; the Lord only opens her heart that she listens attentively to Paul. But this is enough; baptism is immediately imparted without delay, and before the meeting breaks up. The haste is such, that only after her baptism has she a chance of proffering to Paul the hospitality of her house. Here again we see baptism conferred as soon as the people can be made to agree to receive it. They are not made to wait for their baptism, or undergo a course of preparation and teaching. No, it is almost forced upon them, on the very spot where they listen for the first time to the preaching of the Gospel. They are baptized first and taught afterwards.

The same precipitancy is observed in the baptism of the jailer and of his family. (Acts xvi. 25 - 34.) Awakened in the middle of the night by an earthquake, they hear for the first time the Gospel spoken of. They feel moved, and at the instant, without waiting for daylight, without preparations, without a moment for reflection, without calling together a meeting of the brethren of the place, they are hurried to baptism. Now-a-days, we would all tax such a baptism with shocking impropriety and culpable levity; but it seems evident that the Apostles must have entertained very different notions from ours upon the inmost nature of baptism, and its peculiar usefulness to the receiver. It seems as if they had thought it their duty to take advantage of the very first indication of a feeling of compunction in an unconverted listener for hastening to confer upon him a baptism of water. The version says that they were baptized "straightway"; the original is stronger, if possible, "at the very instant." True, it is stated farther on (ver. 34) that he rejoiced and believed; but this comes only after his baptism, which must have contributed to this final happy result of rejoicing and believing. Then the question would be again to know how he believed, for if he believed as did the Samaritans and Simon Magus, this belief did not surely imply conversion and justifying faith. The same remark applies to

the brief mention of the baptism of some Corinthians, — “Many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized.” (Acts xviii. 8.) The former baptisms explain sufficiently this passage where the details fail us.

§ 58. **Twelve Ignorant Men baptized in haste at the close of a Conversation.** — There remains now but one more baptism to examine, namely, that of “certain disciples” whom Paul re-baptized. (Acts xix. 1–6.) Here again the people are baptized in haste, and immediately at the close of a conversation with Paul. They were twelve. An hour before their baptism, they still ignored the Gospel and even the existence of the Holy Ghost, and yet they were baptized all twelve together and at once. Have they all been converted together at the same minute? Have they all twelve, and without a single exception, believed and experienced a change of heart, and all at the same instant, through some magical power in Paul? This absurdity must be admitted, or else it must be granted that these twelve were baptized without regard to faith, and before they had it. A unanimous assent of twelve men to what Paul said is quite natural and easily understood, and upon this they are baptized. But in order to find here a baptism of believers, Paul has to be endowed with

the power of changing men's hearts at pleasure, and thus to be put in the place of God. For the rest, they received the Holy Ghost only after the baptism of water.

§ 59. **A leading Object of Baptism was to bring the Receiver to believe in Jesus Christ.**— But this is not all; in this very passage we have an important declaration upon the connection existing between faith and water-baptism, namely, that “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Christ Jesus.” (Acts xix. 4.) He did not baptize believers, but people who “should believe on Christ Jesus.” He preached first to the people to repent, then he baptized them as a token of repentance, and when baptized he preached to them that they should believe on Christ Jesus. So much says Scripture. John therefore made of his baptism a veritable preaching of saving faith, an ordinance through which to obtain the grace of believing. He baptized with water the called, urging them to become the chosen. But we have already ascertained that the baptism of John is emphatically the baptism of water, the only baptism which the Apostles ever received or conferred. We have here, therefore, a clear declaration of principle laid down in Scripture, which perfectly agrees with all

the facts we have examined, which is the same which we expressed in the beginning, and which alone can satisfactorily explain all the baptisms of which we have a detailed account. This is the baptism of water before faith, and Scripture knows no other.

§ 60. **Scripture knows neither Delay, nor Preparation, nor Examination, nor Discipline in reference to Baptism.**—We have passed under review all the cases of baptism detailed in the New Testament, and nowhere have we found faith placed as a preliminary condition, while we have recognized everywhere baptisms of the unconverted. Two baptisms alone seemed for a while to make an exception; but they were those of the first two Gentiles baptized, and it has been shown not only that the exception was insignificant, but that it agreed with the rule and confirmed it. The fact is, that there is in the Gospel no condition whatever attached to the reception of baptism. The ordinance is as freely imparted as the word of preaching itself; it is even part of the preaching of repentance. Both the preaching and its ordinance are for all who care to listen and to receive. Baptism is given to any one who wishes for it, and there is not a single instance of refusal or postponement. People are urged to receive it as soon as

they assent to the preaching, and great haste is evinced in bringing them to the ceremony. No discipline, no examination, no time of probation to make sure of faith, not even a question asked. An external assent to the truths of the Gospel is sufficient, and the readiness to receive the water of baptism is considered as sufficient proof of assent to the preaching just heard. The condition, if there be any, is entirely subjective; it is the affair of the candidate and not of the baptizer. But these facts can in no way be reconciled with the doctrine of Baptists, nor even with that of most Pedobaptists.

§ 61. **The Gospel places Baptism always before, and the Baptists always after, Faith; it is the most flagrant Contradiction imaginable.—**

We feel so strong on the ground of Scriptural facts that we can afford to make generously a great concession to Baptists, and yet prove to them, in an invincible manner, that their whole practice is just the reverse of that of the Apostles. Therefore let us concede for a while that both the eunuch and Cornelius were baptized only after faith, and there still remains to us untouched the great truth, the impregnable position, that

THERE IS NO INSTANCE IN THE BIBLE OF A SINGLE PERSON BEING BAPTIZED LATER THAN THE VERY DAY OF HIS CONVERSION.

Here is the practice of the Apostles. Now for that of the Baptists : —

THERE IS NO INSTANCE OF THE BAPTISTS IMMERSING A BELIEVER THE VERY DAY OF HIS CONVERSION, OR AT ANY TIME SOONER.

Here is a striking contrast between the two practices, and the one entirely gives the lie to the other. Tax your imagination for a more flagrant contradiction of the practice of the Apostles, and you cannot find it. Of course, Baptists do not profess to baptize a man earlier than the day of his conversion, since they insist upon the baptism of believers only. Moreover, we have never met with a Baptist who had been immersed on the very day and hour of his conversion ; we question if there be any such, and the case must be a very rare one indeed if it exists at all. Thus is a Baptist Church, through the baptism of each of its members, a living protest against the practice of Jesus Christ and his Apostles. This is a sad thing to say, but it is a fact by far too incontestable. Moreover, who does not know where Baptists go in order to recruit their ranks ! Who does not know that it is in the bosom of Evangelical churches, much more than amidst the crowds of a perishing world, that they strive for new adherents to enlarge their numbers ! They are Christian brethren those whom they seek to convert, not to the Gospel, but to Anabaptism, and many receive

their pretended baptism twenty years or more after their conversion. The Romish Mass is probably not quite so far removed from the Gospel as the baptism of Baptists.

§ 62. **Dangerous Semi-Anabaptism of Pedobaptists. Adults and Children must receive the same Baptism.** — It is but fair and true to add, also, that the baptism of adults, conferred by Pedobaptists after faith only, and by following the same discipline used for admission to the Lord's Supper, is a Semi-Anabaptism, contrary to Scripture, and which receives its punishment, from the fact that it is everywhere through this dangerous concession that Baptists gain access to the mind and conscience of simple-minded people. Their work is half done by Pedobaptists themselves; it requires only to ask the people to be logical and consistent, and if they would have but an after-faith baptism for themselves, not to give another to their children, not to violate their own principles in baptizing those who cannot believe. How many Pedobaptist brethren, to whom their inmost Christian feeling and practical common sense whisper that Anabaptism cannot be the truth, and who are, however, incapable of forming any clear conception on the doctrine of baptism, and lose themselves in the intricate maze of contradictions which

that Semi-Anabaptism, where they find themselves placed without suspecting it, suggests to their minds. And the champions of Pedobaptism write with an admirable simplicity: "We are perfectly agreed with Baptists in reference to the baptism of adults; we differ only in reference to infants; we practise, in common with Baptists, only the believer's baptism for adults, and base ourselves for this on the same texts with them; why, then, bring these texts against infant baptism?" This recalls to our mind the story of that walled city which was preparing against the invasion of the French. The defence of one of its three gates had been neglected, because situated on the opposite side to that where the enemy was expected to arrive. But the assailants appearing before that very gate, the officer in command exclaimed in vain: "Gentlemen, you are not expected at this gate; please to pass on to the other gates." They went in just the same through the defenceless gate, laughing at the incredible simplicity of the inhabitants and their defenders, and unconcerned for the great preparations made at the other gates.

BAPTISM ALWAYS BEFORE FAITH BOTH FOR ADULTS AND FOR INFANTS: such should be the device of Pedobaptists. With it, they will easily resist the onset of Anabaptism; without it, the issue of the conflict will at best remain doubtful, — the enemy

will enter the place through the gate left open, and will recruit their ranks with prisoners taken from the Evangelical churches. It is but just to observe here, that there is a wide difference between the several Pedobaptist churches as to the severity of the admission of adults to baptism, and this generally according as their discipline for the Lord's Supper is more or less rigorous. The Independents, otherwise called the Congregationalists, are the most strict of any; Presbyterians and Episcopalians are easier, and the practice of some of them in reference to adult baptism comes very near our own point of view. But experience shows that the more strict a church is as to adult baptism, the more it is exposed to inroads from Baptist propagandism. Let no inference, however, be drawn from this in behalf of laxity of discipline in the Lord's Supper; for we only attack the transfer of the discipline of the one sacrament to the other as unjustifiable and mischievous, however proper and Scriptural that discipline may be in its right place.

Baptism before faith once well established through the facts and declarations of Scripture, all opposition to infant baptism falls of itself, since that opposition rests altogether upon the anti-Scriptural idea that baptism must be given exclusively to believers. Although baptism before faith is alone justified in

principle, it will happen, through accident or neglect or error, that it is omitted at the proper time, or delayed, and then an exception will become necessary, not to the principle, but to its application; and a person placed in such exceptional circumstances will do well to fulfil "all righteousness" and to receive a baptism of water even after faith. Much as such delay is to be regretted, it will then be proper to decide, as in former times for circumcision, and now-a-days for the admission to church-membership and participation in the Holy Supper, that it is better late than never.

§ 63. **Immersion implies Baptism before Faith.**—Our conclusions on the relative order of baptism to faith are already drawn, and, as we believe, well supported by stanch Gospel facts. But we will not take leave of the subject without some additional strictures.

The Baptists unconsciously admit by implication our principle, and corroborate it in two different ways. First, by their immersion itself. They profess to represent through it a burial with Christ. Let us take them at their word. Burial with Christ would evidently be damnation, if not followed by resurrection with Christ. Sin causes death, and baptism buries, but faith does neither. The part of faith is to raise up, and its action does not pre-

cede, but follows baptism. This argument is not ours; it is that of St. Paul, if we are to understand with Baptists, in its literal meaning, their following favorite passage: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith." (Col. ii. 12.) Here is certainly baptism-burial put before faith. But Baptists have changed all this. If we are to credit them, one must first be raised up by faith to be buried afterwards in baptism. It is a complete inversion of the Gospel.

§ 64. **Baptists themselves confer Baptism before Faith and acknowledge officially and publicly its Validity.**— Finally, whatever Baptists may assert as to the absolute necessity of faith to render a baptism valid, they are the very first to deny it in practice. You say that infant baptism is not valid, that it is not even a baptism at all, because it has been imparted without faith, and you re-baptize those who have received it, because you admit as valid only the believer's baptism. But you confer yourselves thousands of baptisms, which, in your own point of view, are no better than those of infants,—indeed, are worth much less. Are you able to read the heart, and are you perfectly certain that a man has a genuine faith, and that he is already regenerated, when you immerse him?

Does it never happen that those whom you have baptized show afterwards through their works that they had not yet received faith at the time of their baptism? If this does not happen to you, you are more clear-sighted than the Apostles, who baptized even a Simon Magus; more discerning than Jesus Christ, who sanctioned the baptism of multitudes, amongst whom very few persevered. And when it so happens to you that you have made too much haste with your ordinance, and you find it out, what do you think then of your baptism? Is it valid, this baptism imparted without faith, granted to illusion, if not even to hypocrisy? And when these people whom you have baptized too soon become later really converted, why do you not re-baptize them? Why do you concede to them, in contradiction with your own principles, a baptism before faith, which you deny to brethren more faithful? Do you really imagine that this baptism which you so often confer upon the unconverted and upon the hypocrites is worth more than the baptism of infants? As to ourselves, we place it infinitely below. But as for you, you declare null and void the baptism of innocence, and valid that of unbelief or hypocrisy! You witness, therefore, against yourselves that you admit as genuine and valid, baptism before faith under its worst aspect. The amazing contradictions in which you are com-

pelled to involve yourselves, indicate sufficiently that your doctrine is not of God, that it is a modern invention, which does not rise above the level of all the human traditions of the Church of Rome.

CHAPTER VI.

THE COMMISSION GIVEN TO THE APOSTLES BY JESUS CHRIST.

§ 65. **There is in the whole of the New Testament but a single and unique Command to Baptize.**—All the accounts of baptism supplied by the New Testament have now been passed in review, and searched to ascertain in every separate instance which of the two, baptism or faith, precedes the other. After having exhausted this source of information, we have been compelled to acknowledge that baptism always precedes regenerating faith, and is itself preceded only by that external assent indispensable in order that a person should agree to pass through the ceremony. This assent is at any rate a belief, and the word *believe* can be used to express it, as indeed Scripture sometimes does; but it is far from being faith in the absolute sense, faith that saves and regenerates. We have ascertained, moreover, that baptism followed immediately and at the very instant the first indication

of external assent, that haste was exhibited in conferring it upon any one who agreed to receive it, and that there is not a single instance of a person listening with joy or attention to the preaching of the word, whose baptism had been postponed to the morrow. Having exhausted the investigation of that class of facts, our next move now should be to seek if there are not, in reference to baptism, some positive commands of the Lord and the Apostles, which might further enlighten us upon the nature of this ordinance and its relation to faith. After careful search, we can find in the whole New Testament but one sole command to baptize, and that is given to the eleven disciples by the Lord himself, after his resurrection. It is the following: —

“Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”
(Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.)

This command, being the single one in the whole New Testament which refers to baptizing, deserves particular attention. We are bound to investigate with the greatest concern all that it implies, as well as to ascertain what it does not imply.

§ 66. **The Command having been given to the Eleven Apostles alone, and not transferred by**

them to others, points to the Old Testament for Scriptural Authority to perform the Ordinance.

— 1st. The injunction to baptize is given to the eleven alone, and nowhere do we see it transferred by them. There is no command whatever of the Apostles, either expressed or even implied, authorizing us to baptize. Moreover, all the baptisms are performed by the Apostles themselves, with only two exceptions, namely, Philip the Evangelist and Ananias the prophet, who have received a special mission, have the gift of miracles, and are responsible to the Apostles. It must be confessed that baptism has somewhat the appearance of an apostolical prerogative, which we have arrogated to ourselves without sufficient authority; and that when we protest against the attempt of the priest to confer the Holy Ghost, after baptism, through the laying on of hands, we might, with some show of truth, be reproached that we do much the same, and that our baptism has for its support neither more authority nor more efficacy than this vain imposition of hands. Ecclesiastical history will not avail to help us out of this difficulty, for if it shows that baptism was very early practised in the Church, it shows also that the laying on of hands always followed baptism, and was in use just as early. Thus, in a word, there is but one command to baptize, the command is given to the eleven alone, and not to us, and the eleven

have not "delivered" it to us, as they have that for the Holy Supper. (1 Cor. xi. 23.) The Quakers and Socinus are therefore perfectly right in saying that nothing in the New Testament enjoins upon us the practice of baptism. Only let us beware of concluding with them that baptism was an ordinance limited to the time of the Apostles, and extinct with them. No, for it existed before the Apostles, before John the Baptist, and they only modified a religious practice enjoined already by Moses. But, at the same time, it is only by adopting the Old Testament as a foundation, and connecting with it the practice of baptism, that we obtain sufficient right to perpetuate it. A resort to the Old Testament must, of course, exceedingly displease Baptists; but if they deny it to us, we shall in turn deny to them the right of baptizing in any way at all, baptism becoming then a practice without authority, a usurpation upon the Apostles, similar to the exorcism of the Greek and Roman Churches. We say no more at present, postponing to a later stage the study of the relation of baptism to the Old Covenant.

§ 67. **The Commission refers also to the Old Testament for the External Mode of Baptism and its Symbolical Meaning.** — 2d. We must remark in the second place that the command of the

Lord fails entirely to appoint the mode of baptism, or even to hint at it. This sole order to baptize, does not state whether baptism should be performed by aspersion or immersion, nor whether there should be one application of water, or, according to the Fathers, three, to correspond to the three persons of the Trinity in the triple name of which the baptism is to be conferred. In the command of the Lord, the form of baptism is left out, as already known and prescribed, since the disciples had already practised it after John, and in the same manner. But John the Baptist, in his turn, takes also for granted that the form of baptism is already known and ordered before him, and teaches nothing whatever in this respect. The command of the Lord, therefore, forces us back to the Old Testament for information on the mode of baptism.

3d. As to the religious and symbolic import of baptism, the Lord commands nothing and explains nothing. He supposes it already known and understood, and John the Baptist does the same. He only commands his disciples to continue the practice of a ceremony already established, and to apply it to the evangelization of the heathen. For the original religious meaning of the ceremony, Jesus Christ forces us back again to the Old Testament, without the light of which, nothing but mere hypothesis can be made on the nature of baptism,

and all baptismal theories must rest more or less on fancy.

§ 68. **The Command is not general; refers only to the Baptism of Heathen, and not to that of the People of God.**—4th. The command to baptize applies exclusively to “the nations.” From this it is generally inferred that there is here a command to baptize all mankind. But it is by no means the case, although the version is liable to lead one into this error. The word in the original is *ἔθνη*, the Gentiles,—the heathen in opposition to the Jews. There is not in the New Testament a word the meaning of which is better ascertained and so much beyond discussion. It is employed over a hundred times, and this is the very word used exclusively by Paul in speaking of the Gentiles. The expression strictly excludes the Jews. Thus it is said: “The Apostles and brethren that were in Judæa heard that the *Gentiles* (nations) had also received the word of God.” (Acts xi. 1.) Paul said unto the Jews: “We turn from you to the *Gentiles*.” (Acts xiii. 46). “He hath called us, not of the Jews only, but also of the *Gentiles*.” (Rom. ix. 24.) The command of Jesus Christ to baptize is therefore not a general one, applying to mankind, but a special one, applying to a certain portion of mankind only;—to a

nationality still more distinct from that of the Jews than Chinese are from Frenchmen. There was no need of command or even authorization on the part of the Lord to baptize Jews, because the law had already given the authority; but one was needed for the Gentiles.

5th. The command of Jesus Christ is a formal revocation of a previous injunction given to the disciples at the time of their first mission. He had ordered them, saying: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles." Now, on the contrary, all being accomplished, he orders them, saying: "Go ye and teach all the Gentiles, baptizing them and teaching them."

§ 69. **The Command consists in making Disciples of the Heathen, and in baptizing them previous to teaching them.** — 6th. The injunction towards the nations is literally to make them disciples: "Go and make disciples all nations" (*μαθητεύσατε*). All critics and all new versions are agreed that this is the only correct translation. All the remainder of the passage is but explicative of this, — *make disciples*, — and the order does not bear directly on baptism, which is mentioned here only as a means, and not as an end. The command is, "Go and make disciples all nations." But how is it to be executed? 1st. In baptizing

them ; 2d. In teaching them. The command, of course, to be obeyed, must be executed by the prescribed means ; but after all the fact remains, that it does not refer directly to baptism itself, which is mentioned here, not as the direct object of the command, but, what is infinitely less, as a prescribed means to reach a certain end, namely, that of making disciples.

7th. There is a succession in the two means prescribed, and what goes first is baptism and afterwards only teaching. There is nothing placed before baptism, unless it be the assent of the subject to receive it, which, in the commission of Jesus, is merely implied and not expressed, because it is a matter of course. They then flatly contradict Jesus Christ, who put before baptism either teaching, or regenerating faith, or any course of catechization. The Lord wishes that the Gentiles, in order to enter his kingdom, should commence at the very first by a ceremony of initiation, by the purifying water of baptism given at the very moment that they consent to receive it, and that the teaching should proceed afterwards. There are some ordinances of the law which he will not destroy, but confirm and enhance in his new kingdom, and amongst these is the water-baptism unto the purification of the defiled. His Apostles are Jews ; to them the heathen are defiled. They never could or would initiate them into the

mysteries of the kingdom and to the promises of Israel, as long as they remain in their state of impurity. And therefore their Master commands them, Go and first purify through baptism these defiled heathen, and then teach them all I have taught you. Is it not, then, disobeying the command of Christ to insist that teaching, conversion, and faith shall precede baptism? Is it not, in fact, a complete perversion of the command? Jesus thus enjoins, in a very clear and very positive manner, baptism before faith; and his Apostles have strictly obeyed the injunction, as we have recognized when we passed under review all the baptisms which they have conferred.

§ 70. **Every Brother is a Disciple, but every Disciple is not a Brother.** — 8th. The name of disciple is not synonymous with that of brother or saint, but indicates an inferior religious degree. Hence follows that in Scriptural language each brother is certainly a disciple, but each disciple is not a brother. This is already indicated by the very meaning of the word disciple, both in the original and in the version. A disciple is a pupil who learns what his Master teaches him. The disciples of the Gospel are at the school of Christ, taught either directly by himself or by those to whom he has intrusted the discipline and the

teaching of the Gospel. A disciple may be converted or not, but a brother is always supposed to be. These crowds, which we have seen listening with pleasure to the Word, and being baptized, although in not one out of ten was the seed to spring up and bear fruit unto life eternal, — these crowds, say we, were composed of disciples, for they were baptized and taught, and this, says Jesus Christ, constitutes the disciple. “Make the nations disciples, baptizing them and teaching them.” The disciple has given to the Gospel an external and formal assent through his baptism, and if he has not yet the faith to be saved, he is at least in a state of preparation for it, and on the only way which may lead him, through perseverance, to the new birth.

The twelve Apostles were called disciples so long as they had not faith and remained unbelievers, like Thomas (John xx. 29); unconverted, like Peter (Luke xxii. 32). They were just beginning to believe when Jesus was about to die (John xvi. 31). Only after the resurrection of their Master, only after their faith has been tried and brought out, do they exchange the name of disciples for that of apostles, brethren, or saints, which is never ascribed to them before. “Jesus Christ baptized more disciples than John.” (John iv. 1.) But John baptized them by crowds; were such disci-

ples brethren? Far from it; they belonged to the called, almost the totality of whom remained unbelieving, and ultimately turned their backs upon the Gospel. The commission which Jesus gave to the eleven was simply the command to do amongst the heathen nations what they had done hitherto exclusively amongst the Jews; namely, first to baptize all the called that could be made to listen to their appeal, and to teach them afterwards. We are told (John vi. 66) that several disciples went back and withdrew from the Lord. Not only were these disciples not converted, but they were even rapidly losing the weak and temporary interest they had taken in the doctrines of the kingdom. They belonged, however, to the class of the baptized; if they withdrew, they still retained this external privilege, and when they returned to Jesus they were not re-baptized, which would have been unavoidable were faith and conversion indispensable to the validity of baptism. But as not only baptism, but also subsequent teaching, constituted a disciple, the name was not applied to those who, after their baptism, did not undergo teaching and withdrew. The disciples were all the baptized who persevered in listening to the preaching of Jesus Christ and his Apostles.

When the disciples had become a great multitude, when "the Apostles had taught much people," then

was the name of Christian applied for the first time, at Antioch, to the increasing numbers of the called who attended the meetings. (Acts xi. 26.) The name of Christian was not therefore synonymous with brother and saint, but it was the name given to all that great people which attended the preaching of the Gospel. Then, a great number of unconverted were Christian. One was generally a Christian before becoming a brother. There is no sure evidence of the disciples being admitted to the Lord's Supper, but they were to Agapes. "The disciples came together to break bread." (Acts xx. 7.) The best manuscripts, however, omit here the word *disciple*. The name was extended even to people who ignored that there was a Holy Ghost, but who, however, notwithstanding their deep ignorance, professed some adherence to Christianity. (xix. 1, 2.) Finally, Paul just after his conversion is ranked amongst the disciples, and until he has undergone trial for a certain time, he is not numbered with the brethren. (Acts ix. 19, 26, 30.) At first they would not believe he was even a disciple. The Apostles and the brethren in Jerusalem are alone consulted in church matters, and not the disciples. (xi. 1.) But when there is question of collecting at Antioch for the brethren in Jerusalem, the brethren are not alone called for a contribution, but all the disciples, as including the brethren

(xi. 29), which is quite natural. However, in the same way as he only is a true Jew who is such in spirit and in truth, thus also the true disciple, the true Christian, is only he who arrives at regenerating faith. In this sense could Jesus say to his disciples: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. Bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples." (John viii. 31; xv. 8.) They were already the professed disciples of Christ when he urges them to become truly his disciples.

§ 71. **The Baptists suppress the Disciples.**—

The difference which was made then between disciples and brethren is still carried out this day in all disciplined churches, for there are the members of the congregation distinct from those of the church. In all such churches, the congregation, that is to say the called, are taught indeed, but in Pedobaptist churches alone have they been first baptized to be taught according to the commission of the Lord to his Apostles. It follows that, strictly speaking, the regular congregation must be composed of disciples, which is the case in a Presbyterian church for instance, but not at all in a Baptist one. Out of three classes of men, which the Gospel recognizes everywhere,—the men of the world, the called, and the chosen, or, in reference to the church, the world, the disciples, and the brethren,

ren,—the Baptists have entirely suppressed one, namely, the intermediate class, that true nursery of the Church. There is for them but the world and the brethren; besides an immersed church-membership, nothing but a class of unbaptized hearers, which includes on the same level both the heathen and the children of believers. And an arbitrary suppression leading easily to another, all the Pedobaptist brethren are classed with the world, and debarred from the Lord's Supper and the privileges of the Church. Virtually it comes to this, that there are no genuine brethren but Baptists, and that all the other churches are just the world.

§ 72. **One can believe and be baptized with Water without being saved.**—9th. In the parallel passage of Mark xvi. 15, 16, the Lord issues his commission without making baptism the subject of any command. The commission given to the Apostles bears exclusively on the preaching of the Gospel,—“Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature,”—which confirms completely that baptism is not the end of the commission, but only one of the means to accomplish it. We have ascertained also in our first chapter that the words which follow, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,” cannot be understood of any baptism unless that of the Holy

Ghost, for this alone is essential to be saved. Let us add here, that to insist on applying these words to the baptism of water would be to force a positive falsehood upon Jesus Christ. For Scripture declares, and in the very same words of the Lord, that Simon Magus "believed and was baptized," and yet he was not saved. "Thy money perish with thee!" said Peter to him. (Acts viii. 13, 20.) Therefore, in Scriptural language, to believe and be baptized with water does not imply saving faith; but to believe and be baptized with the Holy Ghost is to be saved. Let this distinction be well remembered when the account of the eunuch's baptism is read.

§ 73. **A Nation is not a Nation without the Children, and the Baptism of Adults is not enjoined in any way more than that of Infants.**

— 10th. In order to complete our investigation of the sole baptismal command of the Lord, we must furthermore put the question, Does it imply or not infant baptism? This question introduces us rather prematurely to a new point; but while investigating the commission of the Lord, we must completely sift all that is implied in it. If the commission does not go into many particulars, it has at least the widest range ever contended for as to the subjects of baptism. Nations are very certainly composed

of both adults and children, and the Lord orders to baptize nations. The commission, therefore, leaves to infant baptism the widest margin that it is possible to desire or even to imagine. Infant baptism is implied in the command just and exactly as much as adult baptism. These two baptisms, which are evidently but one in the mind of Christ, must here stand or fall together. If one is denied, so must the other be. Unless some posterior counter-order is found elsewhere in Scripture, some restraining declaration tantamount to a positive order of God, we are bound to baptize children if we are not to disobey the command of Jesus Christ. But it is well known that no such exceptional injunction is found in Scripture. What sacrilegious hand, then, attempts to take away something from the words of the command of Jesus Christ, and when he has said, "Baptize all nations," presumes to rewrite the word of God, and make Jesus Christ say: "Do not baptize all nations! Baptize but a part of them! Select the adults for baptism! Leave out the young rising nation! Do not baptize them!" This sacrilegious hand is Baptist, Socinian, Mormon, but it is above all things essentially Rationalist.

§ 74. **The Baptism of Women is merely implied, but not expressly commanded.**—Just as, in olden times, the Pharisees were asking as proof

a miracle from heaven, which was never granted to them, just so, now-a-days, the Baptists, not satisfied with the amplitude of the command of the Lord, insist on the urgency of some special order in reference to that portion of the command which does not suit them,—namely, the baptism of infants. But the Holy Ghost, silent before such an unbelieving exaction, refuses to give the special order either to baptize or not to baptize infants. The priests of Rome also, not content with the amplitude of the command, “Drink ye all of it!” have long asked for a special order to give the cup to laymen, and the Word has not met that exaction. In both cases, the Holy Ghost says to us, through his very silence, The command of the Lord is sufficient. The commission of Jesus Christ does not exclude the baptism of infants any more than it does that of women; rather less; for, indeed, a close adherence to the letter might exclude women from baptism. In the original, the words “baptizing *them*” refer strictly but to the male sex, *ἀνδρούς*, and not to the nations. Had it not been for two accounts of women baptized in the Acts, our Baptist sects would have felt bound, for want of a special order to the contrary, to immerse only adult males, a practice which would at least have in its favor the advantage of decency.

It must be borne in mind that the order of the

Lord refers to the admission of the heathen into the same covenant with the Jews; that the eleven Apostles, Jews themselves, and imbued with national exclusiveness, would never have thought of initiating the Gentiles into the kingdom of Israel without circumcising also all the males of the family; and that the Lord, in authorizing admission through baptism alone, and without circumcision, had specially in view the males, both adults and infants. Had he, moreover, intended to exclude infants, a very formal restriction would have been indispensable, the idea of initiating the adults of the family without the children being of course something entirely new to the Israelites. The Lord has really not ordained the baptism of women, but he has not forbidden it. There is no indication, however, that under his ministry or that of John the Baptist a single woman had been baptized. Their baptism is probably a development which came later, as consequence of the spiritual nature of Christianity, in which there is neither male nor female, and because, also, the rite was practicable on both sexes, while circumcision was not. The first time women are baptized, the circumstance is carefully recorded; it was an innovation which had Philip for its first originator, and was afterwards indorsed and followed by the Apostles. "They were baptized, both men and women." (Acts viii. 12.)

§ 75. **Baptists suppress the Half of the Command on Baptism, just as the Priests the Half of that on the Holy Supper. But Jesus Christ commands to baptize Children.**—The commission of the Lord is of such supreme importance in the question of baptism that we cannot leave it without summing up carefully the conclusions just reached. It is the sole command to baptize in the New Testament. It does not institute baptism, but supposes it as already instituted and understood, either as to the mode or as to the religious meaning, and for this sends us back to John the Baptist, and he in his turn to the Old Testament. The commission does not apply to the Jews, whose right to baptism was already established; it applies only to the Gentiles, who had then never received Christian baptism, and who are thus placed on a level with Israel. The order is strictly only that of “making disciples” of the nations, and baptism is implied but indirectly in the command, as a means to execute it. The baptism precedes the teaching. The command places no conditions previous to baptism, not even assent, leaving this, however, to be necessarily implied either in the adult or the parent of the child. There is no command of the Lord, either expressed or implied, restricting baptism to believers. The commission sanctions baptism before faith, as John the Baptist and the Apostles practised

it. Finally, it enjoins the baptism of infants just as much as that of adults, and by no means separates the nations into two classes, one of which is unbaptizable. Jesus Christ does not command the baptism of adults one whit more than that of children or infants; the Divine authority is precisely equal for the baptism of both. The priest who deprives the laymen of the cup, and who decides arbitrarily that "Drink ye all" means all the clergy, and that a special order is wanted for the laymen, does not trample upon the Word of God any more than the Baptist does. If we baptize infants, it is because Jesus Christ has commanded us to do so, and because we do not feel at liberty to disobey him. If there is no authority for baptizing children, there is none either for baptizing adults. The baptism of infants, or no baptism at all, such is Scripture. The sole restriction as to subjects, to which the text might lend itself, is the baptism of males, which literally is alone prescribed, while that of women is left unmentioned.

These conclusions are important ones; not only do they elucidate the subject, but they point out to us in what direction we must pursue our investigations on baptism. A glance backwards on the Old Testament becomes indispensable.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ANTECEDENTS OF EVANGELICAL BAPTISM.

§ 76. **The New Testament is incomplete in reference to Baptism.** — When Jesus Christ entered on his ministry, he found the baptism of water already established and practised by his forerunner; he only continued it, limiting it to the Jews while he lived, and extending it to the Gentiles after his death. But of whom had John the Baptist himself learned the ceremony? Where did he ascertain its mode, its religious import, and the subjects who are to receive it? Was a special revelation made to instruct him in reference to this rite, or did he find the practice already established, and only continued it, and made it more special in connection with the expected coming of the Messiah? Besides, was John himself baptized? If he was not, what right had he to impose on others as necessary a ceremony which he had not himself undergone? If he had gone through it, who then had baptized him?

Here are a good many questions, very important and indeed essential to the study of baptism, which without their solution can neither be understood nor practised with any certainty; and yet they remain without an answer in the New Testament. John received no special revelation on the rite of baptism. He only received the order to baptize the people with water (John i. 33), but that was all. This does not imply that he was the first to baptize, any more than the order given to Paul to preach will show that no one had ever preached before him. On the contrary, the order, to be understood, supposes the practice already established. Now, it is without precedent, and we might well say impossible, that God should have instituted a new ceremony, without clearly explaining it, without stating its religious import, without fixing its symbolical meaning, and without prescribing its mode of performance. When circumcision is first established, into how many precise details goes Scripture, so that there should be no room for doubt and uncertainty! See again, later, with what care, what precision, the sacrifices and all the ceremonies of the law are introduced. And under the New Covenant, notice how the same care, the same precautions, are taken, in order to institute the sacrament of the Holy Supper. Jesus prescribes the mode, he explains the import of the rite, and the Apostles, after

him, repeat again to the faithful the very words of Christ instituting the ordinance, so as to have it well understood. But as to baptism, there are no words of its institution, either from John the Baptist, or from Jesus Christ, or from any of the Apostles; and the only command concerning it, that of the Lord, prescribes solely the baptism of the heathen, and implies the anterior existence of the ceremony. Here and there you can catch in the Biblical accounts of baptism, or in the allusions made to it by the Apostles, some fragments of its doctrine or of its practice, which are as so many dispersed rays of light, which have to be gathered and concentrated with great labor, but with only a partial success, leaving ample room for fancy and discord. The assistance of the Fathers is called in, and their obscure statements, united to the incomplete data of the New Testament, are used for the erection of a baptismal scaffolding, and the higher it rises, the more one feels that there is something wanting in the foundations. Baptist or Pedobaptist, each endeavors to prop up his tottering edifice even with the most flimsy materials; but the moment the wind blows fresh from the regions of criticism or logic, the whole crumbles down.

§ 77. **There are Three Alternatives: 1. Reject Baptism altogether. 2. Construct it on**

Tradition and Fancy. 3. Connect it with the Old Testament.— This gap, this great deficiency in the Gospel, compels us to one of the three following alternatives.

First alternative.— Leave the baptism of water entirely aside, as impracticable for us. We should in this case acknowledge, with Quakers and Socinians, that it was a transitory rite, destined to introduce Christianity into the world, but the practice of which belonged only to the beginnings of the new dispensation, and that, if we have neither commands nor positive instructions in regard to it, the reason is that it was never intended we should practise it. Many Evangelical Christians in our days, without professing openly this opinion, conform tacitly to it. Shaken in their views through the Baptists, but feeling considerable repugnance to join them, they remain half-way in a practical negation of baptism, having lost confidence in the one they received, and refraining both from being re-baptized themselves, or from having their children baptized. This passive negativism, which is on the increase, serves admirably the interests of the Baptists; for if it does not secure the parent to their church, it at least forces adult baptism on his children. Extremes often meet, and unbelief promotes effectually the practice of a baptism of believers only, for it cannot be denied that both infidels and Baptists are perfectly agreed in rejecting infant baptism.

Second alternative.—The attempt can be made to construct the doctrine of baptism on the very incomplete data of the New Testament, by adding materials drawn from the Fathers, and filling up with hypothesis and probabilities. This is the fashion of Baptists and Romanists, and unfortunately also to some extent of Pedobaptists. But, as we have seen, the materials drawn from the New Testament alone are totally insufficient, while those from the Fathers are at least a whole century posterior to the Apostles, and already well impregnated with superstition. So that, when this second alternative is adopted, the field is opened to imagination, and a superficial but inventive mind will be able, without much exertion, to construct either the baptism of Romanists, or that of Greeks, or that of Lutherans, or that of Puseyites, or that of Baptists, or again that of Mormons; but such baptism will ever be, in relation to Scripture, but a castle in the air.

Third alternative.—Finally, the origin of baptism will be sought in an epoch anterior to John the Baptist; it will be ascertained whether the New Testament does not connect the rite with something antecedent, which explains it, and whether baptism does not borrow essentially the character of another ceremony, more ancient, to which it is first associated, and for which it is then substituted. In a word, the whole Bible, and not the New Testa-

ment alone, will be taken as the legitimate field of investigation for baptism. In this case, neither the mode, nor the meaning, nor the practice of baptism shall any longer be vague, nor a theme for religious fancy, but they shall be determined with precision by antecedents. It will be readily understood that we point here to the Mosaical ablutions, the covenants, and circumcision. Indeed, with all this do we connect baptism. Far more, we protest that there can be no real knowledge of baptism without these antecedents, that without them the rite becomes uncertain and impracticable, and that all which is constructed outside of these premises is not really baptism, but another spurious ceremony, a facsimile of modern invention, to which a usurped name, borrowed from Scripture, has been added.

CHAPTER VIII.

PURIFICATION AND THE BAPTISMS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

§ 78. **The Baptism of Water is Purification Symbolical and Religious.**—“Christ has sanctified and cleansed the Church with the washing of water by the Word.” (Eph. v. 26.) Or, more correctly, according to the original, “Christ has sanctified the Church in purifying it by the washing of the water in his Word.” In these terms does Paul allude to the figure of baptism. He calls it “a washing of water which purifies,” and elsewhere “a washing of regeneration and of renewing.” (Titus iii. 5, original.) Purification was thus the leading idea of baptism with the Apostles. First, external purification of the flesh through the water, then internal purification of the soul through the Spirit. This is the thought of Peter, when he speaks of water-baptism as “the putting away of the filth of the flesh.” This was the thought of Jesus Christ when he washed the feet of his disciples, and

used the external purification of water as a type of that internal purification, without which there is no salvation. "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. . . . He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit; and ye are clean, but not all." (John xiii. 8, 10.) Finally, it is only purification which both the disciples of John and the Jews saw in baptism. "There arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. And they came unto John, and said to him, Rabbi, he that was with thee, behold, the same baptizeth." The question of purifying was thus one of baptism. (John iii. 25, 26.) Water was kept in "water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews." (ii. 6.) "When the Jews come from the market, except they *baptize*, they eat not. They baptize also, cups, pots, and beds." (Mark vii. 4, orig.) Pilate himself, though a pagan, in conformity with the popular idea, washes his hands publicly, as a religious symbol of innocence, of purification from the crime which is about to be perpetrated. All these washings and baptisms with regard to purification were religious customs of the Jews, long established, and perfectly understood by the whole people, so that to them the baptism of John needed no explanation; it was the purification of a people preparing for the coming of the Messiah. But the custom

was not the creation of these Jews, they had inherited it from their forefathers; it was prescribed to them by the law of Moses, although they had exaggerated it through their traditions. Thus also the Epistle to the Hebrews, which connects so intimately the New Covenant with the Old, has not failed to speak of baptism in the same Mosaical sense, as being an external purification, type of the internal one. It says, "Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." (Heb. x. 22.) Finally, the same Epistle classes "the doctrine of baptisms" amongst the elementary doctrines of Christianity (vi. 3), and, referring again to these "divers washings" (in the original, baptisms), informs us that they were ordinances of the law of Moses. In these last two passages the original expressions are just the same, "baptisms," and differ only in the version. The last declaration on these "divers baptisms" is formal, and sends us back unequivocally to the Old Testament for their explanation. Let us, therefore, conform to this valuable direction of the Holy Ghost.

§ 79. **The Baptism of a whole Nation before Sinai.**—The most ancient act of religious purification through water, mentioned in the Bible, is that of the purification of the people at the moment

when the law is to be promulgated from the top of Sinai: "Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes." (Ex. xix. 10, 22.) The priests also must be sanctified after the same manner. This sanctification of the people implied a conformity with the ordinances for purification, a partial washing of the body, without which the washing of the clothes could not have sanctified them. Purified clothes put upon an unpurified body would have become instantly defiled again. "And thus shalt thou do unto them to cleanse them; sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean." (Numb. viii. 7.) A lustral sanctification of the whole people then took place before Sinai. From necessity this baptism was administered to all without exception, including women and even infants; otherwise the men, being alone purified, would immediately have been defiled again by contact with their wives and children, while they were to be kept sanctified for two days. It was a similar purification of the whole people, with the same object in view, and with the same religious and symbolical import, that John the Baptist was ordered from heaven to perform. It was the external sanctification of the whole people, intended, like that of Sinai, to prepare for the promulgation of a new law, — that

of the Messiah, the Gospel. At the first purification before Sinai there may have been some moral compulsion, for he who would have refused to let either himself or any member of his family be sanctified, would have been cut off from the nation. The second national purification — that of the New Covenant — was, on the contrary, to be voluntary. John was therefore ordered not to force it upon the people, but to preach it, baptizing all who accepted his message. It is known how multitudes listened to his voice, and how the people were baptized in a mass. They seemed quite prepared to forsake the Old Covenant and accept the long-promised new one; but when the doctrines of the latter were known to them, their carnal hearts rebelled, as formerly Israel in the desert.

§ 80. **The Initiating Baptism of the Priesthood.** — After this general baptism of the nation comes the special baptism of the priests, which is the first act of the ceremony of ordination to the priesthood. (Ex. xxix. 4.) The order given to Moses was to sanctify Aaron and his sons, and their consecration takes place through the water and the blood successively applied to their bodies. Aaron does not baptize himself, but Moses baptizes him in the name of the Lord; and Aaron and his sons, in turn, baptize the future priests. (xl. 12–15.)

Moses, the first baptizer, had himself been previously baptized from the hand of God in the Red Sea. After first receiving his baptism from the hand of another, the priest must repeat it himself each time he goes into the holy place, to indicate that nothing impure or defiled shall enter the abode of Divinity, and for this purpose a laver of brass was placed at the door of the tabernacle. But this baptism was not an immersion. "Aaron and his sons shall only wash their hands and their feet, and this shall be a statute forever, through all generations." (Ex. xxx. 18, 19, 21.) The water must even be always poured over the body, and not the feet and hands dipped into it, for otherwise the laver would have become defiled. (Lev. xv. 12; 2 Kings iii. 11.) For the same reason, immersion, which was used only for some inanimate objects, always took place in running water. The baptism of the priests was that of affusion or sprinkling. Again, elsewhere, Moses thus ordains the consecration of the priests, saying: "Take the Levites from among the children of Israel and cleanse them. And thus shalt thou do unto them to cleanse them: SPRINKLE water of purifying upon them." (Numb. viii. 6, 7.)

§ 81. **The Baptism by Sprinkling in Purification for Sin.** — We pass in silence over the

lustral purifications for the leper, dead bodies, impure animals, and inanimate objects, to reach the baptism of purification for sin. This baptism does not take place without sacrifice. A heifer is immolated, consumed by fire, and its ashes mingled with the water of baptism, to be used by the congregation of the children of Israel and sprinkled over them; "it is a purification for sin." (Numb. xix. 9.) This passage is very remarkable, for it, with the whole context, explains both the essential meaning of baptism and its mode. First it is called in the Hebrew and by the Septuagint a WATER OF SPRINKLING, and not, as in the version, "a water of separation." At any rate, this water is only to be SPRINKLED (ver. 13, 18-21), and it is also a PURIFICATION FOR SIN. This baptism was obligatory. "The man that shall not purify himself shall be cut off from amongst the congregation; the water not having been sprinkled upon him, he is unclean." (ver. 20.) This baptism was conferred upon all with the greatest facility: The sprinkling of water was made upon WHOMSOEVER was defiled (ver. 13), and even upon all persons present in an unclean place, without distinction of age or sex. Even inanimate objects, supposed unclean, such as tents and vessels, were baptized with the same sprinkling (ver. 18). Children were then included in the prescription, and baptized as well as the rest.

§ 82. **In the Days of Jesus Christ a Baptist would not have been understood, and would have passed for a Monomaniac.** — Such were both the practice and doctrine of the Jews upon baptism, from Moses to Jesus Christ. They were all extremely familiar with baptisms, because they had been ordered by God in the law. The novelty of the baptism of John could consist only in the modification of an ancient ceremony, which moreover had its analogy in the baptism of the people before Mount Sinai. This is why neither John, nor Jesus, nor the Apostles explain the ceremony or prescribe its mode. It would have been superfluous to institute or to explain a religious usage which was universal in their nation. If in the Gospel times a single Baptist could have arisen, no one would have listened to him, for no one would have understood him. Clearly he would have passed for a lunatic and a monomaniac who should have made it a case of conscience not to baptize children, when they baptized even tents, tables, and pots. If John the Baptist, the Lord, and the Apostles had wished to introduce Baptist practice, they would have been obliged to give the most formal instructions to overthrow the established practice, and to combat the notions upon baptism proceeding from the Old Testament. They have not done it. It would have been necessary

to restrain, through severe rules of exclusion, the great facility with which baptism was performed. There is none, not even one. Not a word of restriction. At this period a Baptist would have been a being entirely incomprehensible.

§ 83. **The Baptism of the Gospel is prepared through the Prophets.** — The prophets prepared the baptism of the Gospel by making the purification of water the symbol of spiritual purification. They say: “Wash you, make you clean.” (Is. i. 16; iv. 4.) “I shall be sanctified in you; I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and I will put my spirit within you.” (Ezek. xxxvi. 23–27.) “Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” (Ps. li. 2, 7.) To these declarations John could appeal in preaching his baptism.

§ 84. **John the Baptist was himself baptized, and that by Sprinkling.** — At last the great prophet, John the Baptist, appears on the scene; he preaches that the coming of the Messiah is imminent, that he will soon establish the promised New Covenant, and he urges the people to prepare for

it by purifying themselves through a baptism of water, as a sign of that purification from sins of which the Messiah brings the remission. But what right has he to baptize? Has he been baptized himself? Undoubtedly he has, for he is the son of a priest, Zacharias, and as the priesthood was hereditary, and he had been brought up under the law, he must necessarily have entered the priesthood at the age of thirty (Numb. iv. 3), and have been ordained to it through the baptism of initiation. He had then received the baptism of priesthood, a unique baptism, which was never repeated on the same subject. He was baptized before he began his ministry; he was himself baptized before he baptized others, and the sole baptism which he received was both a baptism by sprinkling and one ordered by the law. The Jews and the multitudes would never have acknowledged John's right to baptize them if he had not been himself a priest, and moreover a prophet, for all held him to be such. This character could alone justify his mission before the people, and confer upon him the authority, as upon a new Moses, of purifying the whole nation through baptism.

§ 85. **John the Baptist innovates as to Baptism, by restricting the External Form and extending the Spiritual Meaning.**—The baptism

of John, both as to its form and as to its symbolical meaning, was deeply rooted in antecedents, and evolved from the baptisms which had preceded, which had been ordained of God, and more than a thousand years in use. The new circumstances under which baptism was imparted alone modified the sense, while retaining the form. John baptized for the remission of sins; this was nothing new, it was the old idea; the novelty consisted in baptizing upon a special reference to the coming of Christ, and placed in his Messianic work the ground for the future remission of sins. What was new is the further development of the spiritual idea, the intimation of a baptism of the Holy Ghost to be looked for after the baptism of water, and that general confession of sins, implied, it is true, in the baptism of Moses, but not in such a decided manner. What was new, again, is that John replaced all the "divers baptisms" which had preceded by a unique baptism of water, upon which he concentrated all the religious ideas of former lustrations. While he conferred upon the people a baptism of purification of sins, he administered to Jesus Christ a baptism of consecration to the priesthood. And we also, in turn, are made priests with John the Baptist and with Jesus Christ, in figure, through the baptism of water, and in reality through the baptism of the Holy Ghost which follows.

The baptism of John introduced also an external innovation, not in the mode, but in the concomitant circumstances of baptism. He left aside the blood, and retained but the water. At the ordination of priests, the baptism of water was followed with an aspersion of the blood of a victim; and under the Old Testament the ashes of a sacrifice were introduced into the water of the baptism of purification for sin. John, as the prophet-Fore-runner, sees henceforth no sacrifice but that of the Lamb of God, without blemish and without spot. He separates his baptism from sacrifice. What John has done, is therefore but to simplify and to restrict, in its external mode, an ancient ceremony, and at the same time to impart a greater development to its spiritual meaning. For this reason is the institution called in the Gospel the baptism of John, not only to distinguish it from the baptisms of Moses, but also because John alone, and not the Apostles, introduced the last modifications in the baptism of water. It is also called the baptism of repentance to distinguish it from the formal and ceremonious baptisms of the Jews. But these very names imply the existence of a baptism previous to John; otherwise the institution would have been simply called the baptism, and this would have been sufficient, if there had been no other practised from which it had to be distinguished.

§ 86. **The Baptism of the Death of Christ, — the Consequence and the Complement of the Baptism of Water.** — This symbolical meaning of the baptism of water, found in the Old Testament, namely, that of an external religious purification, casts a vivid light on some difficult passages. Thus, these words of our Saviour, “But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!” (Luke xii. 50); and again, when he says to the sons of Zebedee, “Are ye able to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” (Matt. xx. 22.) Let us insert here the true meaning of the word baptize, namely, to purify, and thus regard it as signifying not only the purification, but also the sacrifice for sin and the consecration to the priesthood; how clear and spiritual then becomes the import of these passages! Here is the high-priest consecrating himself through his blood, offering himself for the people as a propitiation for their sins, which he bears upon himself. Sacrifice was wanting as an integral part of the new baptism introduced under the Gospel; Jesus Christ will himself complete baptism. (Heb. ix. 24, 26; x. 12, 13.) “He comes by water and blood, not by water only, but by water and blood.” He begins his ministry by water, and he ends it by blood. Henceforth baptism will remind us of the beginning of his work, of the necessity on our part of repent-

ance, and the need of a remission of sins ; while the Holy Supper will make us remember the end of his work, its accomplishment through his blood poured out. Baptism will be a look cast at the future ; the Supper, a remembrance of the past. The Son of man, loaded as he was with the guilt of mankind, was straitened until his expiatory career was closed, until he was purified and consecrated through a bloody death. The sons of Zebedee were baptized with water, but they had not yet been baptized with this baptism which Jesus Christ expected. They had not been baptized into his death, and yet Jesus Christ announces to them that at some future time they will share in his baptism : “ Ye shall indeed be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with.” Yes, and every regenerated believer is baptized into the death of Christ through the very fact of his faith. He is crucified with him, dead with him, and raised up with him. But this spiritual baptism the Apostles received only long after their baptism of water, and the thief on the cross shared in this baptism, without having ever passed through a baptismal ceremony.

§ 87. **Who are those who are Baptized for the Dead.** — The baptism for the dead (1 Cor. xv. 29), which has tortured so many commentators, and upon which there are so many hypotheses afloat,

owes all its obscurity to the pertinacity with which a Christian baptism has been sought in the practice alluded to here. Paul refers simply to the Mosaic custom of being baptized for the dead when defiled by contact with them. (Numb. xix.) This custom had already been called in the Septuagint "being baptized from the dead" (see § 20). The Apostle employs here an argument *ad hominem*. Those who denied the resurrection of the dead were the Sadducees; several of the disciples had once belonged to that sect, and still retained more or less that error. But these people continued to observe the law of Moses, and undoubtedly, like other Jews, attached much importance to their ablutions. Paul therefore argues with them, saying: What significance can a religious purification for the dead have, if there be no resurrection of the body? Impurity is what ought not to be. But if death is the absolute end of man, the permanent state to which he is destined, it is no longer an impurity, it cannot imply religious defilement. The doctrine of purifications becomes an aimless folly, for it can have sense only inasmuch as death is an abnormal state, a thing not to be; baptism for the dead, therefore, inevitably implies resurrection. Such an argument may appear singular to us, but it was probably the strongest that could be employed on that point with converted Jews. At any rate, the baptism for the

dead, being a Scriptural fact of the Old Testament, it is not fair to set it aside in this passage, in order to select one of the thirty and more groundless hypotheses which have been proposed in explanation.

CHAPTER IX.

BAPTISM, THE CHURCH AND THE FAMILY.

§ 88. **The Question of Baptism ought not to become complicated with that of the Church, but should remain Distinct and Independent.**—The Church question interferes to complicate that of baptism in most of the works on the latter subject. These make an ecclesiastical affair of baptism by the following very logical reasoning: Baptism is a sign of admission into the Church, and gives a right of entrance there; it is therefore an institution of the Church, which belongs peculiarly to it, which it alone has the right to confer, which depends upon it, and which cannot be separated from it. Baptists and Pedobaptists are agreed on this point, and connect their discipline more or less with their baptism. We have nevertheless the temerity to deny this relation entirely, and to believe that baptism exists independently of the Church. Let us not be condemned unheard! Our reason for isolating the study of baptism from all church theory

is very simple ; it is, that baptism existed and was practised a long time before the foundation of the Church ; it is then independent of it, and has its own complete autonomy. Doubtless the Church which is come after is bound to regard it, to recognize it as the oldest evangelical institution ; it can, and even ought to make it a preliminary condition for the admission of its members. But it cannot alter this rite, either as to its mode, or as to its symbolical sense, or as to the class of persons to be its recipients, for the rite is anterior to the Church. Baptism can explain the Church, but the Church cannot explain baptism. The Church can only confirm this ordinance, lean upon it, and make use of it. Many baptized persons never become members of the Church, but all the members of a church are baptized. Baptism then occupies a larger arena than the Church.

Ecclesiastical preoccupations have proved fatal to the study of baptism. By wishing to explain its doctrine through that of the Church, it has been embroiled, confused, and rendered more intricate, by mixing it up with materials foreign to it. The Church question is at least as doubtful, as difficult, as much controverted now-a-days as that of baptism. Therefore, by trying to make the one doctrine dependent upon the other, uncertainty and confusion have only been increased. No doubt that when one

has on hand a ready-made church theory, the temptation to impose it upon baptism, and put the latter into shape for propping up some ecclesiastical organization, is wellnigh irresistible. But then the object of convincing others in reference to baptism fails, except in the case of those holding similar ecclesiastical views, who are precisely those who least need to be convinced. Indeed, the reproach might be made to one of the most considerable works published on baptism, that it is much less a treatise on baptism than a treatise on the Church with special reference to baptism.

§ 89. **A Church does not baptize, and Baptism does not introduce into a Church.**—A very evident fact is that a church never baptizes. It cannot do so. But it is always an individual who baptizes, either after the rules laid down by this or that church, or independently of all these rules, and upon his sole individual responsibility. It would be an abuse of language to say that the Presbyterian Church has baptized a child, because the rite was performed by a Presbyterian minister. Moreover, there is not on earth one sole and universal visible Church; but there are several churches, which often exclude each other, and whose baptisms differ widely. Thus, if it were the Church that baptized through its ministerial agent, it would be

entitled to baptize only for its own account, and would impart, through baptism, no right of admission into other churches. A man baptized in the Lutheran Church would belong to it, and should be re-baptized before being received into another church. Let a Nestorian priest baptize a child or an adult while travelling in the United States, and we shall ask, To what church has he initiated the receiver of this baptism? Shall the latter be considered as belonging to the Nestorian Church? Shall he be re-baptized for admission into one of the churches of the country? And supposing that the baptizer should not himself belong to any church, that, for instance, he has just been converted while travelling, shall the validity of the baptism he has conferred be disputed? No, the baptism will be acknowledged by all as valid, although it never introduced the receiver into any church, just as the baptisms of John the Baptist and of the Lord were valid, although they did not admit into any church. Thus baptism, as an initiation into a church, is a dogmatic fiction. It is not found in Scripture, but is an ecclesiastical rule subsequent to Apostolical times. A church may with propriety admit only baptized members into its bosom; but Scriptural baptism does not *per se* admit to any church-membership.

§ 90. **Baptism is above all the Institution of the Christian Family.** — But if baptism exists independently of all churches, it is certainly at least an institution of the Christian family. It is even here essentially that we recognize its importance. We are convinced, from Scripture, that baptism is not only the first external and formal bond which ties man to his Creator, but that it binds also the whole family to God, through its chief, and the members of a household towards each other, and that each man, woman, and child should receive this sign and carry it with him.

We shall proceed still further, and show that, whenever baptism is neglected as an institution of the family, it is virtually denied by the head of the house. We shall establish that there is no true baptism except that in which all the members of a Christian family are allowed to share, and that the baptism which excludes children, namely, that of Baptists, is vitiated through that very exclusion, that it is for the parent who receives it a ceremony incomplete, unfinished, and therefore not valid. Just as we hold that the communion which proceeds as far as the bread, but stops there and withholds the cup, is incomplete and virtually no communion at all; just so do we hold that the baptism of a parent, which does not extend to his children, but is purposely withheld from them, is

incomplete, is virtually no baptism at all. It will follow that Baptist church-members may be held as unbaptized Christians so long as they refuse to complete the Christian rite by allowing it to be extended to their household. This, it will be objected, is taking rather high ground, and going much beyond Pedobaptists. We do not deny it; but let our proofs be carefully examined in the following chapters.

CHAPTER X.

THE NATURE OF COVENANTS AND THEIR SIGNS.

§ 91. **Every Covenant is necessarily confirmed by a Seal, an Oath, or some Symbolical Sign.**—Baptism is the sign of the New Covenant, just as circumcision is that of the Old. All are agreed on this point, which need not therefore be proved. They differ only on the relation and analogy existing between the two signs, some denying that the one should have taken the place of the other, that they should have the same import, and be conferred upon the same subjects or according to the same principles. We shall have to examine, therefore, Bible in hand, what relation circumcision bears to baptism; but we must preface this study by another, much more general and comprehensive, upon the covenants themselves, upon the nature of their signs of initiation, and upon the symbolical meaning of the latter. We shall ascertain that there are in the Bible, general principles, sure and necessary, which apply to any covenant and to the imparting

of its sign. And we shall decide what rules Scripture lays down as to the signs of a covenant, and as to the persons upon whom these signs are to be conferred.

First, what is a sign given of God to man in order to insure a promise? Men vouch for their most solemn engagements in various ways. First through written agreements to which they append their signatures. A higher degree of certainty is imparted to the document when to the signature a seal is added. As long as the seal is not broken, it remains the material, unchangeable, and impassible witness of a serious promise, and it binds the signer more than the signature alone would do, because it is a new and superadded sign of confirmation. When to an engagement given verbally a solemn gesture is added, such as a hand laid over the heart, or any other external demonstration, this is a sign which imparts more weight to the words. Finally, men have instituted the oath as the most solemn confirmation of a treaty, an alliance, or even any serious engagement. But the oath is composed of two distinct parts,—the word and the external sign of gesture. The latter is used only to give greater weight to the former; it is of itself a language understood of all, more awful and also more precise and more true inasmuch as it leaves no room for the ambiguity often concealed in words.

This sign of the hand lifted towards heaven, while the words of the oath are being uttered, binds man both towards God and towards his fellow-men who witness his gesture. God could not close an alliance with man without introducing also some sign, some religious symbol, less perishable than the writing and sealing of a document, which should be distinct from the oath used in earthly transactions, and which, however, should be sufficiently solemn to bind man to God and to his fellow-men. Moreover, it was proper that with each change of covenant there should also be an external modification of the sign, to express in symbolical language the religious change in the alliance.

§ 92. **The Three Covenants of the Lord, and their Signs; Baptists arbitrarily limit the Third.**

—These alterations indeed took place, and while undergoing three covenants with the Lord, mankind has also received three successive signs. First in order comes the covenant concluded with Noah, and which has for its sign the rainbow. This sign is not put in the flesh; God alone performs it, and man has no hand in it. Then the second covenant, the sign of which, circumcision, is placed in the flesh, practised by men, but limited to one sex. Finally, the third covenant, which has for its sign baptism, is conferred upon both sexes. But here,

according to Baptists, God, in extending to women the sign of his alliance, limited it on another side by taking it away from children. Such curtailment of religious privilege seems at the very first glance incredible and monstrous, and it would require very solid proof and very formal declarations to lead us to admit for a moment such a contradiction in the designs of God, such an abridgment of his favors. But let us examine successively the signs of each alliance and the conditions with which they are connected.

§ 93. **The First Covenant is concluded with Noah, but not without the Participation of his Children.** — The alliance of God with Noah extends to all his race, but is officially concluded only with the males, Noah and his sons. “And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; and with every living creature. This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.” (Gen. ix. 8–12.) The terms of this covenant are very general: it includes very certainly children and infants, since it extends even to the fowls of the

air. It is not a covenant of spiritual salvation, but a covenant of earthly salvation, a temporal mercy, the right of living, the promise of preserving animal existence. This covenant has not been abolished by the accession of the two succeeding ones; on the contrary, it still lasts, it is perpetual. Its sign is like the sun in the heavens, which shines for everybody; it extends to the whole of animated creation, which is all included in this covenant.

§ 94. **The Second Covenant is made with Abraham and his Children. As the Third does not annul the other Two, its Sign alone suffices for and confirms all Three.**—The second alliance is concluded with Abraham; not with Moses, who came four hundred years later, and whose law altered nothing in the conditions of the covenant. Let us here authenticate at once two important facts. One is, that the second covenant did not annul the first, which continues until now in full force; the other is, that the abolition of the law of Moses does in no way affect the second alliance, or alter any of its terms, for it is older than the law, and independent of it. When the third covenant is introduced, it will let the second subsist, and only be added to it, unless God orders differently in very express words. But far from this, the New Testament expressly reserves

the promise made to Abraham, namely, the second covenant, as being permanent, and the inheritance of Gentiles. The third alliance has only added to the first two without taking away anything. Not so with signs, otherwise called tokens. That of the second covenant must needs have fallen into disuse, for since the third covenant confirmed all the privileges of the other two, the sign confirmatory of the last alliance inevitably seals alone all that the first two signs sealed.

§ 95. **The Alliance made with Abraham is perpetual, and is neither abrogated nor abridged by a subsequent Alliance.**—The covenant entered into with Abraham, say the Baptists, was a carnal alliance, referring only to the Jewish race, and it is abolished. Not so does Saint Paul understand it. (Rom. iv. ; Gal. iii.) He considers, on the contrary, this alliance as essentially spiritual and unchangeable ; and, indeed, as such did God give it to Abraham. “The Lord appeared to him, and said, I am the Almighty God ; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto

thee, and to thy seed after thee. Every man-child among you shall be circumcised, and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant." (Gen. xvii. 1-14.) We could not think of giving the lie to God, and therefore we believe him upon his own word when he solemnly declares that his covenant with Abraham is an everlasting one. We believe also, without the slightest hesitation, the subsequent declarations of the Holy Ghost, when, after the introduction of the third covenant, he teaches us that the second is not abrogated, and confirms unto us its spiritual import. We accept also, without raising difficulties, the interpretation which Paul gives of this text, when he explains that this promise of becoming the father of many nations does not concern the Jewish race, which forms only one nation, but the Gentiles, and that this is a paternity of faith. (Rom. iv. 12, 17, 18.) We accept also his explanation that the promise made in reference to the seed implies Christ, and that through Christ all believers under the third covenant are the seed of Abraham. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. iii. 15, 16, 29.) We have therefore God's pledge that the alliance has neither been abolished nor altered. The token

alone can have been modified, or rather absorbed into a new token, without affecting in the least the covenant itself.

§ 96. **The Second Covenant, far from being Carnal, is eminently Spiritual, the Promise of Posterity signed through Circumcision having Reference to Christ.** — The attempt has been made to lower the covenant made with Abraham, and in order to show that it was carnal, its sign, circumcision, has been pointed to as implying above all a promise of posterity according to the flesh, and therefore without analogy with baptism. The objection, it must be confessed, is specious, but it is in reality very superficial, and does not bear examination. When God spoke with Abraham, he resorted to the language used and understood by the patriarchs; this language did not consist only of Hebrew words, but also of the symbolical forms then in use, and which in the East, more than elsewhere, are the language of languages. In the opinion of these times, and before circumcision was introduced, the sexual organ of man represented both himself and his family and his posterity in a figurative sense. This figure was so literally true, that it was more a reality than a figure. An alliance covenanted with the head of a family, and embracing his posterity, borrowed in the solemnity of the confirming oath

the figure in use amongst the people of the East. When Abraham made the ruling servant of his house, who was to survive him, swear an oath which concerned his posterity, he resorted to this energetic figure. (Gen. xxiv. 2, 3, 9.) The Lord borrowed for his covenant a symbol already understood, established and practised as a sign of alliance between men, introducing only a slight change in the mode. He could not possibly have selected then a sign more solemn, more eloquent, or better understood.

The covenant, through its very sign, pointed to posterity. And in truth the children, even the unborn ones, were bound by the pledge of Abraham "to walk before God and to be perfect." (Gen. xvii. 1.) There is nothing carnal there, but, on the contrary, an eminently spiritual covenant. But, say the Baptists, this sign referred also to the seed of Abraham, to the promise of the birth of a posterity, and this part of the covenant was excessively carnal; such a covenant cannot concern us. Carnal! no; for, says St. Paul, "this seed is Christ." (Gal. iii. 16.) The promise of a Saviour who was to come in the flesh, being the seed of Abraham, carnal!! And the sign which seals this promise degraded below a water-baptism, because it does not, like that rite, refer exclusively to justification by faith, but implies also in addition the promise of the

birth of Christ! Such infatuation does not deserve the honor of any further notice, and we take leave of it here.

§ 97. **Circumcision was an immense Privilege, — the Spiritual Bond which united all the Members of the Family to God and to one another.** — Now, was circumcision a privilege, or was it a burden of the law? Such a question seems almost idle. If the covenant is a grace, the seal which confirms it can only be an additional grace, and the Jews have at all times considered circumcision as an immense religious privilege which they enjoyed over other nations. But again, this circumcision which was granted to Abraham as a privilege, as a special act of favor, was it such also for his children? We shall answer through another question. Are the signature, the seal, and the oath, which confirm a future inheritance to a child still a minor, of no advantage to him? Certainly the child has an immense interest at stake in the transaction, although totally unconscious of it. He who would laugh at the process, and turn into ridicule the signature made for a minor by his parent or guardian, asserting that all proceedings of a nature to bind should be stayed until the child can himself sign, would decidedly not have the scoffers on his side, and would very soon pass for insane.

Let, at least, the same practical common-sense be turned to what belongs to the covenants of the Lord and to their signs !

The circumcision of a child was not only a privilege to him ; it was also one to the parent. While the latter rejoiced in the promise of the Lord, part of his joy consisted in the assurance that the covenant was a religious benefit which he was imparting to his posterity. Just as worldly riches can scarcely be enjoyed by a kind parent if he is debarred from handing them over to his children, and the right of legacy enhances their value, just so was it part of the enjoyment of the possession of the covenant to be able to transmit it as a sacred inheritance to one's family and whole household. By circumcising his new-born babe, the parent was closing an alliance with the Lord for the benefit of the child. The latter was brought up in that covenant ; as soon as he began to think and to speak, they inculcated upon him that he belonged to the Lord ; that his father, using his paternal right, had bound him to that holy service through a solemn act, and that he could not escape the obligation as long as under parental authority. If afterwards he did not follow the ways of the Lord, he broke the covenant, and it was his own doing. If he persevered, he continued faithful to the Lord, and proved true to the engagement entered into for him by his parents. The

parents, on their side, pledged themselves solemnly, through the ceremony, to bring up their child in the fear of God, to make him observe his commands, and to compel him to fulfil all the obligations of the covenant. This rite, through its consequences, was an immense spiritual blessing for both parents and children. It was the religious bond of the family, which drew together all its members to God. This consecration of each individual not only bound him, but implied also his posterity. Nor should it be imagined, that because males only received the sign, females were excluded from the covenant. All the seed being covenanted in reference not only to the present, but also to the future, and whatever was born, male or female being that consecrated seed, belonged by this very fact to the covenant of the Lord.

§ 98. **It is tantamount to denying Scripture and insulting God to assert that the New Covenant has lessened or suppressed the Privileges of the Old one towards any Portion of the Family.** — Circumcision was then emphatically the religious institution of the family. A spiritual ordinance, the pledge of the Covenant, the symbol of the faithfulness of God, it proved a glorious privilege, which was dear to the heart of every father and mother in Israel. But now comes the

New Covenant, and it brings along a new token. Then, according to the Baptists, Woe to Israel! Woe to the believers! Woe to their children! A magnificent privilege of God is going to be torn from them, and nothing will be placed in its stead. The Lord, if we are to trust them, is going to break his covenant with the family, and henceforth he will enter into no covenant engagement except with adults individually. The Christian family is about to be degraded below the Jewish household, and placed on a level with the pagan family! God, who had promised an everlasting covenant to the faithful and to his posterity, is going to lie, to withdraw completely from the child the privileges he had conceded to him, and to thus lessen also those of the parent! In a word, they make the Lord say: "I extend hereafter the token of my covenant upon women, but I take it away from children!" If this was only a Baptist fable, it would be bad enough, but it is really an insult offered to God; it is denying his Word; it is giving the lie to the Apostles, who have assured us that the covenant contracted with Abraham is neither broken nor lessened, and that now as ever "the promise is unto us and to our children." (Acts ii. 39.) The covenants of the Lord will hold good until the end of ages, and the privileges connected with them shall never be lessened, but rather extended. It

is evident that, if the Apostles had preached the Baptist doctrine, and refused to children the rite of initiation to the covenant, the Jews would have repelled their preaching, and would have been right in so doing. Such was their attachment to circumcision, that the Apostles were obliged to allow its practice to continue long after the foundation of the Church, that Paul had to circumcise Timothy, and that Jewish Christians would never have surrendered this privilege, if baptism had not offered to them a full equivalent.

§ 99. **A Sign of Covenant which excludes the Family is not valid, and the Baptism of a Parent without that of his Children is incomplete and of no Value.** — Finally, we desire to draw attention to a fact of the highest importance, which seems to have escaped observation; namely, that when an adult was being circumcised, the circumcision of his children, if he had any, formed an integral and indispensable part of the rite of his own circumcision. There is no instance of a father being circumcised without his children, and the father who would have neglected to have his sons circumcised would have thus impaired his own privilege of circumcision; he would have denied the covenant through this very omission, and its sign would have become useless to him. The rea-

son of this is self-evident. The covenant is first contracted with the parent, and not with the child. "And I will make my covenant between me and thee." (Gen. xvii. 2.) But the token shall be placed upon everything that belongs to the family and household of Abraham, — upon Ishmael, who is excluded from the best promises, and even upon the servants, who are not heirs to them. The idea of a spiritual covenant corresponds, therefore, to that of a political alliance between an inferior chief and a sovereign, through which the chief is bound to cause the treaty to be respected by all who are subject to his own authority, and to make the colors of the empire float over all his dominions. But if the chief excepts from the alliance any portion of his domain, or even the smallest number of his subjects, although he may have signed the treaty, the sovereign will take no account of this signature; he will consider it as being of no avail. He will insist that the alliance embraces the whole household of the chief, without exception, and every household of each of his subjects. It will be necessary that the entire population subject to the chief enter into the alliance, or that not one of them enters into it, and this alliance will bind the grown-up man as well as the child in the cradle, and even the unborn generation. A covenant without these conditions is not a covenant. It is a worthless doc-

ument, to which in vain are attached seal and signature. Such, however, is the mutilated covenant Baptists would persuade us that we have. It is a nonentity. God cannot accept it; and their baptism, through its exclusion of infants, becomes invalid. It may be a baptism, but it is not the baptism, the seal of the covenant, any more than was the baptism of Pharisees. It is just as if Abraham had circumcised himself alone, and had refused to circumcise his household, for some plausible reason. The alliance would not then have been ratified between him and the Lord, through the sole fact that his circumcision, having been made exclusively personal to himself, would have been incomplete. However sincere his love of God, yet his loyalty would have been outwardly that of a rebel. This is so true, that whenever a stranger was having himself circumcised, in order to celebrate the Passover with the people, it was not granted to him, — that is to say, he was not considered as truly circumcised, — unless he had at the same time caused his whole household to be circumcised with him. (Ex. xii. 48.)

§ 100. **The Anger of the Lord is kindled against the Baptist Practice of Moses.** — This view is further confirmed by a very remarkable fact. Moses seems to have allowed himself to be

carried away for a while with Baptist notions; he neglected or postponed the circumcision of his children. We know too well the eminence of his religious character to doubt that in this he acted with perfect sincerity. But, however sincere his error might have been, God was extremely displeased; he saw his covenant virtually set aside; and it was not on the son, who was innocent, but upon the father, the head of the family, that he resolved to punish this neglect, and “the Lord sought to kill him.” The mother was what we call in modern times a rabid Baptist; she was very much opposed to the child receiving circumcision, and became very violent and abusive when her husband enforced his paternal authority in this matter. She was, however, the daughter of Jethro, a man fearing God and a priest; but she had lived amongst the Arabs, these Baptists of the desert, who never circumcise before the age of thirteen, that at which Ishmael received the rite, and she experienced the most lively repugnance to allowing her son to be circumcised. Probably the Baptist rationalism, which taxes with folly the putting of the token of covenant on infants, had taken hold of the mind of this woman, and Moses, at a loss to answer her pungent arguments, had given way to her and yielded to her objections. Moses, like several Evangelical Christians of the day, must have thought that after all

the thing was of very little importance, or else he would not have thus neglected it. But the wrath of God was kindled against his neglect, however plausible, and he imparted to him a severe lesson, which the Holy Ghost has consigned to the pages of Scripture for the instruction of all future ages of the Church. (Ex. iv. 24 - 26.)

CHAPTER XI.

THE HISTORY OF THE COVENANT AND OF ITS SIGN FROM ABRAHAM TO CHRIST.

§ 101. **The Circumcision of Ishmael confers upon him none but Spiritual Privileges.**—

The principles which we have laid down upon the nature of a covenant and its token, are amply confirmed in the Old Testament, for there is no trace in this Divine record of a single alliance contracted between the Lord and an individual, which did not include also the infants in a most remarkable manner. In this connection let us pass under review some facts subsequent to the instituting of the covenant and of circumcision.

Ishmael when adult was expelled in spite of his circumcision, for he had no personal claim to the covenant. He had not been circumcised for his own sake, but for the sake of his parent, Abraham, because the token of the covenant was to be placed upon every member of the household or upon none. The only benefit which Ishmael could and did ob-

tain from circumcision, was a participation in the religious discipline of the family, and this entirely spiritual advantage was the only one accruing to him. It was again more in view of the father than of the child that God ordered Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, in order to test his faithfulness to the covenant through an act of obedience, and thus renew and confirm it. Therefore God said, "Because thou hast not withheld thy son, I will bless thee." This feeling of Abraham, this "not withholding his child from God," should be experienced by every Christian parent when presenting his infant to be baptized.

§ 102. **The General Profanation of the Rite at Sichem was never used as an Argument against the Institution.**— A generation has scarcely passed away since God gave to Abraham the sign of circumcision, when it is profaned at Sichem by the sons of Jacob, and its spiritual import set aside to use the rite as a mere politico-religious ceremony. (Gen. xxxiv.) Why then be dismayed if baptism as well as circumcision was very early corrupted, misunderstood, and turned to superstitious, profane, or even political use! The faithful of those days did not, however, think to remedy the evil by spiritualizing circumcision, and remodelling it by limitation to adult believers. Moses alone tried this auda-

cious and faithless scheme, and with what results is known.

§ 103. **Children and Infants compelled to contract the Covenant.**—That unconscious infants really covenanted with the Lord through their parents when circumcised, is confirmed by other instances. When the Decalogue is promulgated upon Sinai, all the people, as we have seen, including women and infants, were present, and were also all baptized. The observance of the Sabbath, participating in the nature of a covenant, was extended from the head of the family to every member of the household. Children and slaves shall not be permitted to have any voice in the matter, this religious practice is forced upon them, they shall observe it with the head of the family and even against their consent. (Ex. xx. 10.) When, later, God renews his covenant with Israel, he commands that the heads of families shall not stand alone before him, but that their wives and even *their little ones* shall appear to enter into covenant. (Deut. xxix. 10–12.) One consequence of this entering the covenant with a full household is explained a little further (xxx. 11–13); namely, that when God's law shall be read publicly on solemn occasions, children shall be present, that they may hear, and that they may learn to fear the Lord their God.

They are to be recognized officially as disciples, or, if preferred, as apprentice disciples. The children who "have not known anything shall be made to hear, and thus also to learn to fear God, and to do all the words of the law." Observe that they are disciples solely by the will and act of their fathers, and in no sense by any action of their own.

§ 104. **Moses does not prescribe Circumcision, but only enhances its Spirituality.** — Circumcision is ordained but once in the law of Moses (Lev. xii. 3), or, rather, is not ordained at all, but receives a brief passing notice, in reference to another ordinance, that relating to the uncleanness of the child's parent. This shows that Moses considered the ordinance as anterior to his ministry, and that it transcended his powers as lawgiver either to ordain or alter aught in reference to an everlasting covenant and its token. He only spiritualizes it, as the Apostles afterwards spiritualize the new seal of the covenant in speaking of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. "Circumcise the foreskin of your heart. And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." (Deut. x. 16; xxx. 6.)

§ 105. **Moses inflicts upon the People Forty**

Years of Baptist Practice as a Punishment for Unfaithful Parents. — While in the desert, the people rebel against God, and break the Covenant. Then circumcision is suppressed during forty years, from the time of the departure from Egypt until the arrival in Canaan (Josh. v.), that is to say, almost from the moment that Moses became the spiritual conductor of the people, until after his death. No one, therefore, was circumcised under the ministry of Moses. He imposed upon the nation for the space of forty years the genuine Baptist practice of withholding from infants the token of the Covenant. But this was a sign of the wrath of the Lord, who thus was withdrawing his covenant from the families of Israel. Many of these uncircumcised children died before becoming of age, many more became adult, and, although they had never received the sign of the covenant, fell while fighting the battles of the Lord. But when, after long waiting, heads of families are for the first time circumcised on their personal profession of faithfulness to the Lord, their children and their infants receive also with them the token of the covenant. Adults are then circumcised, each with his entire household, just as, later, the Apostles never baptize the head of a family without baptizing all the household with him. Without the participation of their children in it, the token of the covenant

would have been incomplete to the parents themselves.

Now, to whom was this long withholding of infant circumcision a chastisement? To the children? No, for God replaced, by wonders, and by a strict religious discipline, that education of the covenant which their fathers had proved incompetent to give them. Parents alone were thereby chastised; the prohibition from circumcising infants meant that the parents were placed outside the covenant, having broken it, and that the privilege of its sign was taken from them. The value of the token they had received was impaired by their not being permitted to confer it upon their children. This Baptist practice was imposed upon them as a punishment, and is called (Josh. v. 9) "the reproach of Egypt." The evangelical minister who refuses to baptize the child presented to him by a father who is unbelieving, or a scoffer, or a rebel against the Gospel, only follows the precedent of Moses, and is justified by Scripture. The child must be presented for baptism only by such parent as has not notoriously broken the covenant of God.

§ 106. **Joshua renews the Covenant even with Infants, and protests against the Baptist Practice. Josiah follows his Example.** — Later, on a solemn occasion, Joshua renews the covenant with

all the congregation of Israel, and he compels them to be present, "all the women and THE LITTLE ONES, and even the strangers"; for, free or bondsmen, with or without understanding, they must all be bound by the words of the covenant,—it concerns them all. (Josh. viii. 35.) Then when he feels his end drawing near, Joshua again gathers the people together to urge them to remain faithful to the covenant they have contracted through circumcision. "Choose you whom you will serve," says he to them, "but as for me and MY HOUSE, we will serve the Lord." (xxiv. 15.) Joshua expresses energetically by these words the paternal authority over the family in religious matters. This privilege, or rather this responsibility, has never been abolished, although under the benign influence of the Gospel the woman may be called to share it with her husband, provided it be with the full consent of the latter. Baptists, however, teach the Christian parent to say, "As for me I will serve the Lord, and my house will serve whomsoever they choose!" We admire that noble resolution of Joshua, by which he initiates into the covenant, and binds to it his household by virtue of parental authority; but the heart becomes chilled at the sight of this egotism, this spiritual Pharisaism, which would contract a covenant with God for one's self alone, and leave the family outside the covenant and its blessed privileges.

When, under Josiah, Israel renews the covenant with the Lord, children and infants are, as ever, included. In these solemn times of repentance and renovation, which correspond to our religious revivals, the whole people gathered by households, and the meeting included "all the people, GREAT AND SMALL." The words of the covenant were read aloud, and the engagement was concluded with each and every member of the family, even with the little ones, who, however unconscious, were bound by a religious tie, through the act of their parents. (2 Kings xxiii. 2, 3; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 30, 31.) Under Ezra, on the contrary, when the people meet only to be catechized, or to conclude some private alliance, adults alone are required to be present. (Neh. viii. 2, 3; x. 28.)

CHAPTER XII.

BAPTISM SUBSTITUTED FOR CIRCUMCISION.

§ 107. **Circumcision is practised jointly with Baptism during the whole Apostolical Age.** — The New Covenant is introduced by John the Baptist, and adopts for its special sign a rite prophetically enjoined by Moses, as a symbol of purification from sin. The new token of covenant has the advantage over circumcision of being, from its nature, of a more easy and also of a more extensive application, inasmuch as both sexes can receive it. But the rite is slightly modified from its partial Messianic fulfilment. The one sacrifice of Jesus Christ renders all other sacrifices superfluous, and the ashes of burnt-offering will no longer be mixed with the water of baptism. As there is henceforth one sacrifice, there shall also be but one baptism, one single typical washing through the blood of Christ, which need not be repeated. The law of Moses has then come to an end, but the Old Covenant remains standing and immovable, for God

has declared it everlasting. Nor is its token suppressed, but disciples will be both circumcised and baptized. Twenty years after the death of Christ, at the time of the Council of Jerusalem, all the Christians of the model church in that city were still circumcising their children, and it is then only that, with great pains, and after much hesitancy, Paul obtains an apostolical decision which renders the practice of circumcision optional for Gentiles, even after their baptism. It is decided then, for the first time, that the practice shall not be obligatory in the Church; but it continues to receive the sanction of the Apostles, and even Paul, who made least of it, long afterwards circumcises his spiritual son, Timothy. Finally, the practice continues more or less in the Church as far as the historical accounts of the New Testament carry us. As soon after this as ecclesiastical history supplies us with reliable information, we find for the first time the circumcision of children entirely suppressed, and generally replaced by their baptism. The Abyssinians, however, have retained circumcision with baptism up to the present day, and practise both on the same person, on the ground of conformity with the Saviour, — a practice for which they can scarcely be blamed if baptism does not belong to all who had a right to circumcision.

§ 108. **The Old Bridge and the New Bridge, with the Apocryphal Sign-board of the Baptists.**

—Such is the history of circumcision in the New Testament. It is not suppressed by any divine order, it exists for a long time side by side with baptism, it is acknowledged by the Apostles, and both signs are practised. It is only by and by, as a work of time, that circumcision falls into disuse, and that baptism becomes fully substituted. The concomitant existence of these two tokens of the covenant will be best understood by means of a comparison. The kingdom of heaven is similar to a land of blessing, separated by a river from an accursed region. A bridge of wood has been constructed in order to lead over to the blessed land. This bridge is circumcision, it is narrow and difficult, and moreover it is reserved for the exclusive use of a privileged race. In the course of time, the Lord, mercifully anxious to facilitate the approach to his kingdom, orders a new bridge of stone to be constructed, much larger than the first, and of much easier access. He does not make this bridge the exclusive privilege of any race, but he invites “all nations” to pass over it, without making the slightest restriction whatever. But he does not destroy the old bridge, he allows it to stay until, obsolete and antiquated, it may fall of itself, and become gradually impracticable. For a

time, therefore, people will pass over both bridges; but when the old one is abandoned, they will have to be satisfied with the new, which answers all purposes. Thus far Baptists may perhaps agree with us, but further we disagree. First they deny that the new bridge has taken the place of the old, because there is not a Scriptural sign-board, formally saying, "Pass this way all of you who would have passed over the old bridge!" As for us, we believe that it does not show a sufficient sense of propriety and respect to exact from the Master of the kingdom such a superfluity; the fact that there is no better bridge is quite sufficient, without any special inscription.

Not content with this, the Baptists have presumed to place at the head of the bridge their own sign-board. "The nations shall not pass here! Adults alone shall pass, but not their children!" They want to exclude from the new bridge a part of those who had a right to the old. Now we say that this inscription is not of God, is not from the Master of the bridge, and that therefore it should be held of no account. We go beyond, and we say that it is positively false, and against the will of the Master, that the new bridge should have curtailed the privileges attached to the old; but that, on the contrary, these have been enlarged, and that if formerly parents passed with their children into the

Covenant, it is not the will of God now to separate them, and to compel the children to remain behind in the company of hardened heathen. We say finally, that, if God had introduced such restrictions, the old bridge would be far preferable to the new; that it is incomprehensible it should have been allowed to fall into disuse, and that we must resort to it again, as we have the right to do. In a word, let us have circumcision again, if we cannot baptize our children!

It is with this just as with the institutions of Sabbath and Sunday. Both days were observed side by side in the Church, until the Sabbath, without being formally abrogated, fell into disuse, and was superseded by Sunday. A great deal, however, that is plausible and Scriptural can be said to show that the Lord's day is quite a different institution from the Sabbath. A strong argument can also be constructed in proof that there is no instance in the New Testament of the Lord's day being sanctified by any but believers, and that therefore children, servants, and the unconverted must be allowed freely to desecrate a day which does not concern them. Indeed, a doctrine of "The Lord's day for believers only," could easily be shaped into a much more plausible system than that of "Baptism for believers only." But suppose the attempt once made, and the heart and the practical sense of over nine

tenths of Evangelical Christians would hold that it is better to return to the Jewish Sabbath, or if not, to transfer to the Christian Sunday all the obligations of the Jewish Sabbath. Thus have also the immense majority of Evangelical Christians ever felt in reference to baptism and circumcision, and they represent, to say the least, the general feeling and the common sense of Christendom. The doctrine of the Seventh-day Baptists is only the logic of Anabaptism applied to the Sabbath, and these are certainly the most consistent of all Baptists.

§ 109. **Baptism is neither greater nor less than Circumcision.**—All that the comparison of the two bridges implies on the relation of baptism to circumcision agrees in every respect with Scripture, as we shall presently better see. First of all, the two signs are equal in value. Baptism is not more than circumcision, for then the brethren in Jerusalem would not have retained the latter so tenaciously, and endeavored to impose it upon Gentiles, as if their baptism was insufficient to introduce them into the covenant. Nor is baptism less than circumcision; for were this the case, the Church would never have given up the latter, and would have claimed her apostolical right to practise it. Baptism being, therefore, as a sign or token, neither more nor less than circumcision, is certainly equal to it in value.

§ 110. **The Identity of Circumcision and Baptism declared in Scripture.**—The identity of the two rites is otherwise very evident. It results from the very nature of the covenants and their signs, and we have already established it. Let us now add some formal declarations of Scripture. Paul expressly declares in the following passage that we are circumcised by baptism: “In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, buried with him in baptism.” (Col. ii. 11, 12.) Grammar compels us to connect the last participle, “buried,” with the preceding simple tense as an explicative, and we read therefore, “In whom you are circumcised, by being buried with him in baptism.” It is true that reference is here made to spiritual circumcision and spiritual baptism; but to concede that in their spiritual meaning these two figures are identical, is to concede that, in their highest bearing, the one is the equivalent of the other, and that when the first has ceased, the second must have taken its place. If, with Baptists, and for the sake of immersion, a water-baptism is seen in this passage, then the identity will be stronger still, since it would apply even to the external ceremony.

Circumcision is called “a seal of the righteousness of faith.” (Rom. iv. 11.) There is nothing

said more elevated than this in reference to baptism, which cannot therefore be more spiritual than circumcision. That seal of the righteousness of faith was placed formerly, by order of God, upon infants, and circumcision cannot and ought not to cease, without this spiritual seal being continued to them under some new form ; but there is no other than baptism. Baptism, therefore, takes the place of circumcision, and is the seal of the righteousness of faith upon infants, as well as upon adults. There is nothing new here ; the novelty would be if the seal were withdrawn from infants, and for this, clear and special orders would be required. Only on these terms is baptism practicable as the sign of the New Covenant and the seal of the righteousness of faith. Without these terms, baptism would not only be extremely inferior to circumcision, but it would not be a sign of covenant, it would be nothing and worth nothing. Baptist books here take pains to show that Abraham received circumcision only after faith, and that for this reason only is the rite called a seal of the righteousness of faith. Nobody will doubt this, but it is equally certain that the seal of the justifying faith of the parent was henceforth, by order of God, placed upon infants. From the Baptist point of view, it was undoubtedly a very great impropriety thus to impart the seal of justifying faith to infants ; but God knew,

we trust, what he was doing, and there is not a word under the New Covenant to indicate that he repented of this impropriety, or made any alteration in regard to it. It is, therefore, now as ever, the will of God that the seal of the righteousness of faith under one form or another be still placed upon the children of believers. No covenant is visibly ratified with the parents themselves except at this cost. He who denies the sign of the covenant to his children, places himself with them outside.

§ 111. **The Children of a Christian Parent being declared Holy, should receive the Sign of Holiness.** — Circumcision was given only to such children as were *holy* through the circumstance of their birth; that is to say, born of circumcised or believing parents. (Luke ii. 23.) Under the New Covenant, the children of a Christian parent are also *holy*. Paul, writing to the *saints* of the church in Corinth, tells them: “The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they HOLY.” (1 Cor. vii. 14.) The word employed here in the original is *saint*, the very same which is applied to the parents and to the members of the church of Corinth in the second verse of the first

chapter of the same epistle. The believers are *saints*, and their infants are also saints; so says the Apostle of the Gentiles, or rather the Word of God. Baptists have made a great many far-fetched hypotheses in order to explain away this holiness of believers' infants, which absolutely cannot be reconciled with their system. Let them give whatever ingenious explanation they like about the nature of this holiness, it matters not. They cannot alter the fact established by the Apostle, that the children of a Christian parent are *saints*, and that this holiness, whatever it may be, is not possessed by the children of the unbeliever. This is more than enough to show that under the New Covenant, as under the former one, children are a privileged class, holy just as their believing parents are themselves holy, and that therefore they are entitled with them to the token of the Covenant. *Holy* or *saint* means separated, set apart from the world. "Holiness belongeth unto the Lord"; and since it has pleased him to impart it to our children, there is a manifest impiety in refusing to acknowledge it, and in placing our children in the same class with unbelievers and heathen. There is, on the contrary, a manifest obedience to God, in consecrating our children to his service by baptism.

§ 112. **The Identity of the two Institutions proved by the Identity of their essential Features.** — Circumcision and baptism differ merely as to the form, but they have all their symbolical and spiritual features in common. They are both: 1st. The sign or token of a covenant; 2d. A rite of initiation; 3d. A seal of the righteousness of faith; 4th. The symbol of an internal change; 5th. They are conferred upon holy infants; 6th. given but once to the same individual; 7th. They neither save nor change the heart, but form only an external people of the called; 8th. They both imply a solemn promise towards God. (1 Pet. iii. 21.) All these common features make them virtually the same religious institution, with only a modification in the external form, which is a matter of little importance. The Holy Ghost has not given any directions in regard to baptism; he has not fixed any special age for its reception, because the New Covenant implies a greater freedom than the old, and because it was necessary that the new sign should be liberated from all legal obstruction. Baptists alone have invented such, and seek to place us again under a law of their own, having put themselves in place of the Holy Ghost to fix an age at which baptism can be received, and an age at which it is forbidden to impart it. But this is purely a human invention, without any weight, God

having nowhere, either directly or indirectly, fixed an age for the reception of baptism, or excluded infants from the rite.

§ 113. **Twenty Years after the Death of Christ the Council of Jerusalem decides for the first time that Baptism will be held sufficient without Circumcision.** — The primitive Church tolerated circumcision within its bosom, and here is what passed in reference to this practice. Some members of the church in Jerusalem came down to Antioch, where there was a church composed of converted and baptized Gentiles, and they “taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.” (Acts xv. 1.) These Christian teachers from Judæa, it seems, placed baptism much below circumcision, and did not hold it sufficient as a sign of covenant. They were therefore at the antipodes of Baptists, who exalt baptism above circumcision. The question might have been considered settled long ago in the Church, for this happened twenty years after its foundation; but not at all; they contend in Antioch about the necessity of the rite, and cannot agree. The authority of Paul and Barnabas is insufficient to cause the claims of baptism to be respected. It is decided at last to refer the case to the parent

church in Jerusalem; but in this cradle of Christianity the question is still vague and unsettled; they must meet and discuss. Those who insisted upon circumcision were brethren who had once belonged to the sect of the Pharisees, but had believed, and they maintained, in reference to the Gentile converts of Antioch, "It is needful to circumcise them." (ver. 8.) For the rest, it will be remembered that circumcision always included the whole family, both adults and children. One might expect that the Council of Jerusalem would forbid them to be circumcised. Not in the least! It leaves them perfectly free in this respect, and merely forbids (ver. 19) that they should be troubled by urging this rite upon them, and writes to them only to abstain, out of regard to the feelings of the Jews, from some defilements prohibited in the law of Moses. Although baptism is not mentioned here, the decision of the Council came virtually to this: "Considering that you have been baptized, circumcision is supererogatory; you can lay aside the practice, without being troubled as to consequences."

§ 114. **Circumcision remains optional for baptized Gentiles.**—Later still, when the Galatians were worked upon by Judaizing brethren who insisted upon circumcising them and making them

keep the law of Moses, the circumcision of heathen began to be the rallying point of a Pharisaic faction, and Paul opposed himself energetically to the circumcision of Gentiles, saying to them, "I testify to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law." (Gal. v. 3.) These words appear in startling contradiction with those of Rom. iv. and Gal. iii., where Paul shows on the contrary that circumcision is the token of faith, exterior to the law and independent of it. The contradiction vanishes, when it is remembered that those against whom Paul testifies are baptized Christians. If, after their baptism, they make it a case of conscience and of necessity still to receive circumcision, they declare by this very act that they do not hold their baptism to be sufficient, and in denying the sign of the New Covenant they deny the Covenant itself. They place themselves again by their circumcision under the law of Moses, which preceded both baptism and the Covenant of Jesus Christ. All this is very simple.

After the Council of Jerusalem, however, Paul circumcised Timothy, who had been a heathen. Certainly he could never have done so, if circumcision was absolutely forbidden by the Holy Ghost. Neither would he have done it, had he thought that he was thus obliging Timothy to keep the

whole law of Moses. He did it, therefore, because circumcision was permitted to the Christian, and he opposed the practice only when it was made a symbol of party and sect, only when it was connected with an idea of opposition to baptism and to the New Covenant, and when, under the influence of Pharisees, the attempt was made thereby to bind consciences to the law of Moses.

§ 115. **All the Children of Church-members were necessarily either Circumcised or Baptized.**—This perfect freedom in reference to circumcision, and the exceptional circumstances under which alone Paul opposed it, are fully evidenced by the accusations brought against the Apostle on this very point. “Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are amongst the Gentiles, that they ought not to circumcise their children,” etc. (Acts xxi. 21.) The accusation is false (ver. 24): “That all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing.” The Jewish brethren are thus maintained by the Apostles in the privilege of circumcising their children, and no interference with this freedom will be tolerated, although the Apostles surely know that the practice is destined to

gradual extinction. At the same time, Gentiles are written to that they need not observe it, which means that the baptism they have received is sufficient. They are not forbidden, however, to circumcise their children, but only declared free from those who would force the practice upon them. There were, therefore, in the Christian Church two classes of children. Those upon whom the sign of the Covenant had been conferred by circumcision, and those to whom it had been imparted by baptism. Thus there was some equality and community of religious privileges between those children. But, if we are to admit with Baptists that no infant baptism took place, it follows that in every Apostolic church, that of Corinth for instance, there were two distinct and unequal classes of children, — those who were within the covenant of God and had its token, circumcision, and those who, being uncircumcised and also unbaptized, were outside of the Covenant, and had not received any of its signs. Here is, therefore, a sectarian religious division in the midst of this Christian youth. The “holy” children of this brother, who will not even come in contact with the defiled children of that brother. The children of the Covenant, belonging with their parents to the household of God, and the uncovenanted children, ranked contemptuously with a heathen world. These make

two youthful castes, who can never associate together, and will grow up in mutual hatred! One must be remarkably credulous, to imagine that Baptist principles could have existed in the days of the Apostles. The converted heathen would have had no alternative left to them but to circumcise their children, against the advice of the Apostles, or else to create a schism and form a separate church. But the Baptist schism is a modern development, it did not exist then.

§ 116. **Infant Baptism was indispensable to the Unity of the Apostolic Church. The Baptist Practice would have put out Baptism and perpetuated Circumcision.** — Infant baptism was the only thing which could gradually reconcile this difference of practice, and bring external unity to the Church. No one can ever make us believe that a family of Christian Jews would have surrendered the highly valued privilege of circumcision conceded to them by the Apostles, except for a full equivalent in behalf of their children. Baptist principles would unavoidably have brought about the gradual absorption of the rite of baptism into that of circumcision, instead of circumcision being superseded by baptism. On the other hand, the Apostles, who always spared the feelings of the Jews, and respected their religious privileges, did not deem it

expedient to issue a special order for infant baptism, nor to urge its practice. It would have been a premature step, and they would have caused themselves to be looked upon by converted Jews as the enemies of circumcision, by pressing the substitution of an equivalent. They left baptism to its natural development, and gave up to the influence of time and of the Spirit of God the care of harmonizing in the Church the Hellenic and Judaical elements. They knew that, sooner or later, baptism would prevail exclusively as the only sign of covenant with God; but they also knew perfectly that the circumcision of infants would never be surrendered, unless immediately replaced by infant baptism. The latter practice was therefore insured without the need of any special injunction. Therefore, also, the oldest records of ecclesiastical history show it as generally established, and the Fathers of the Church, beginning with the oldest, such as Justin Martyr, state positively that it has taken the place of circumcision. Not until two hundred years after Christ, when the doctrine of the Apostles had already lost much of its purity, do we find the Baptist practice beginning to develop itself as a fruit of superstition, and as the result of the sacramental remission of sins, in a word, the *opus operatum*.

CHAPTER XIII.

INFANT BAPTISM CONFIRMED.

§ 117. **All the Baptismal Evidence of Scripture converges towards Infant Baptism.**— All the Scriptural paths that lead towards baptism having been investigated, most of the facts, doctrines, and analogies which bear on the subject, whether in the Old or in the New Testament, having undergone a rigid examination, we have reached everywhere the same conclusion, — the baptism of infants. Everywhere we have had to recognize that Baptist principles were not only groundless, but stood even in flagrant contradiction to the Bible, and we have not been able to discover one solid argument in their behalf. The principal results already reached in support of infant baptism are the following:— 1st. Baptism always given before justifying faith; 2d. The baptisms of the Old Testament conferred upon infants; 3d. The whole people, with women and children, baptized before Sinai; 4th. The covenant of faith

concluded with Abraham has never been repealed, and subsists still; 5th. It belongs to the very nature of a sign of covenant, that the entire household should receive it; 6th. The sign which the parent denies to his family becomes thereby invalidated to himself; 7th. In the commission given to the Apostles, Jesus Christ commands infant baptism exactly as much as adult baptism; 8th. Baptism takes the place of circumcision, has the same symbolical meaning, and is bound to the same rule; 9th. The children of a Christian parent are holy, and set apart from the world, under the New just as under the Old Covenant; 10th. They inherit the promises of the Covenant with adults; 11th. The Christian Church recognized the privilege of the circumcision of infants, until this rite was gradually replaced by baptism; 12th. God, in granting a New Covenant, has not abridged, but extended, the privileges of the Old.

§ 118. **The great Sophism, that because Infants cannot believe, they must not be Baptized, brought under the Test of Logic.**—To all these already superabundant proofs, we are now about to add a few more, of a different kind. But before proceeding, let us inquire, Where are the facts and proofs of Baptists? They want to prohibit the baptism of infants, but where in Scrip-

ture is a formal interdiction? Neither John the Baptist, nor Jesus Christ, nor the Apostles have uttered a single word against infant baptism. And yet the token of the Covenant having thus far been always placed upon infants, a counter-order, to say the least, was indispensable.

Baptists have not a single Scriptural fact to bring against this ancient privilege, which is traced as far back as to the Father of believers. What, then, have they? One proof, — yes, a single proof, and a far-fetched one, — which after all is no proof at all, but only a great rationalistic sophism. It is this: Baptism is to be imparted only after faith; children have not faith, therefore they cannot be baptized. The premises, as we have seen, are false, for the Apostles have baptized again and again before faith; but the reasoning on these false premises will prove no better. Here is the same argument again, under another favorite form. It is written, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”; therefore one must believe before he can be baptized, and infants, being unable to believe, ought not to be baptized. Here again the premises are false, for this passage speaks of the baptism that saves, namely, that of the Holy Ghost. Let us, however, for a moment concede these premises, in order to test what Baptist logic is worth, and take up the reasoning again. Since the Baptists are de-

terminated to conclude against infant baptism from the above passage, let us at least have the whole of it, and not a garbled quotation. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark xvi. 16, 17.) Now let us follow the Baptists and conclude with them in their own logic: "Infants do not believe, they shall not be baptized; infants do not believe, they shall all be damned!" What a comforting belief for the heart of a parent is the Baptist doctrine and its inflexible logic! But fortunately the Gospel does not damn infants; far from this, it says that for such as resemble them is the kingdom of heaven; and evidently the whole passage in question has not the most distant reference to infants. But if it had, dying infants must undoubtedly all be damned.

Let us apply another test to the Baptist argument: "He who does not believe should not be baptized; infants, therefore, not believing, should not be baptized." Now, let us apply the very same logic to a passage perfectly analogous in its form. Scripture says, "This we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." (2 Thess. iii. 10.) Infants will not work, neither shall they eat, so commands Scripture. Here is Baptist logic in its exactness, neither more nor less. It is pure sophistry. There is just as much

Biblical proof for denying infants food, and thus starving them, as for denying them baptism. There would be even more; for Scripture at least has never said or implied that believers alone should receive the water of baptism, but it declares very positively that he who will not work, neither shall he eat. Here our opponents will probably exclaim: "It is understood as a matter of course that infants cannot be included in that command to work; their fathers are held to be working instead of them, and thus insure them the right to eat!" We are agreed; but pray, why should you have two weights and two measures? To be just, acknowledge also that if Scripture had positively commanded to baptize only those who believe (which, however, it has not), this restriction could refer only to such as are competent to believe, and not in the least to infants, who cannot. It is quite sufficient that their parents should believe, to admit infants to the external privileges resulting from faith, just as they are allowed to eat because their parents work for them. Scripture has denied to them neither food nor baptism; but if it has forbidden the one, it has also the other.

After having exposed in its nakedness this sophism, the only argument of Baptists, let us revert to facts; and in order to neglect nothing important in the support of our cause, let us cumulate additional proofs for infant baptism.

§ 119. **One Million of Children baptized with the Water of the Red Sea by the Lord himself.**—The Gospels relate to us that John the Baptist baptized crowds, whole populations,—in a word, all the people. (Luke iii. 21.) Must we believe that amongst all the people, and amidst such wholesale baptisms, there were no children, not even one child! It is for the Baptists to show that, when all the people set forth for the desert to attend John's preaching, they left all their children at home, or at least that John excluded them, and, indeed, every one of them, from the national rite. Until such an exception is clearly made out, it will be safe to take the most obvious meaning of Scripture, and to admit that there were some children amongst "all the people," and that there was at least one infant "in Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region about Jordan," which class it is declared were baptized. (Matt. iii. 5.) In the mean time, Saint Paul "will not that we should be ignorant that our fathers were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." (1 Cor. x. 2.) We would like to be told whether, when the fathers were sprinkled with the dew of the cloud or with the foam of the surge at the passage of the Red Sea, their children and infants were with them or not? The fact is, that there were on these occasions no less than a million of

children baptized by the hand of God, and who were baptized in company with their parents,—baptized just as much and after the same fashion. These Israelites never dreamed of the Baptist notion of leaving their infants behind them on the Egyptian side of the Red Sea. They knew perfectly that God would not perform the baptism of the parents without that of the children.

Although all were baptized, God did not take pleasure in most of them. The baptism God gave them was in no way different from the multitudinous baptism of the present nations of Christendom. But the subsequent unfaithfulness of the people did not alter the fact that God had baptized them all. Nor does, now-a-days, the unfaithfulness of our Christian masses show anything against the validity of the baptism they may have received in childhood. And “these things” adds the Apostle, “were our examples, and they are written for our admonition” (ver. 6, 11). This is an example, a type, and an admonition to us that we should not think too much of our baptism. Paul says, “They were all baptized, but with many of them God was not well pleased” (ver. 2–5). In order to escape from these conclusions, the attempt shall perhaps be made to spiritualize the whole passage. But the Apostle here does not spiritualize; on the contrary, he takes up very positive facts in the history of the

Jewish nation, and recognizes in the very material circumstance of the sprinkling through the cloud and the sea, the sign of the covenant, the baptism of water. If the baptism of which he speaks here is not that of water, what is it? That of the Holy Ghost? Certainly not; for God rejected most of these baptized ones. It is therefore a real baptism of water which God conferred upon the fathers and also upon a million of their children.

§ 120. **The Laying on of Hands, conferred by the Lord upon Little Children, implies much more than Baptism.** — We have already seen that the children of Christians are placed, by formal declarations of Scripture, in the same position towards the Covenant as Jewish children formerly were. They are declared holy, and the promise belongs to them also. “For the promise is unto you and to your children,” says the Apostle Peter (Acts ii. 39), which is equivalent to saying: “Your children participate in the Covenant just as much as you.” Now, how has Jesus dealt with infants? Has he excluded them from his covenant? Far from it; he has granted them infinitely more than a baptism of water. He has conferred upon them a special blessing; he has publicly laid his hands upon them. He has thus placed them higher than ever did the old covenant, so much so that the Jews, and

even his own disciples, were scandalized. Let us bring the scene distinctly before our minds. Some believing parents, who had the utmost confidence in Jesus Christ, want to present to him their little children. These were infants (*παιδία*) carried in the arms. In their unbelief, the disciples repel them. Moved by a true Baptist sentiment, by a rationalism natural to the heart of man, they say to each other: "What is the use of performing a solemn act upon infants?" But Jesus rebukes them: "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. xix. 13, 14.) Then, not content with this reproof, he crushes the Baptist view arising in the hearts of his disciples by a solemn act, which is a stronger protest than any words could be. He takes to him the infants, he blesses them, and lays his hands on them. And later, when his disciples are more enlightened, when they have received the Holy Ghost and administer the Church, they place that ceremony of the laying on of hands, which their Master had conferred upon infants, far above baptism, which will serve as a step to it. Only after disciples have been first baptized will hands be laid upon them to confer the gift of the Holy Ghost. In fact, after Philip has baptized the people of Samaria, two Apostles must come down from Jerusalem on purpose to lay hands upon these baptized ones, that

they might receive the Holy Ghost ; that is to say, in order to confer upon them a higher degree than baptism had bestowed. And yet this laying on of hands, although superior to baptism, is of less value coming from the Apostles than when administered by the Son of God. He who had left water baptism entirely to his disciples, as a ministry inferior to his, does not hesitate himself to confer a sign of a superior and more spiritual order, namely, the laying on of hands, and it is to little children that he gives it. After this, will it be thought honoring the Lord and following in his footsteps to reprove those who present him their little children for baptism? The greater always implies the less, and the laying on of hands implies baptism and much more than baptism. The laying on of hands is granted only to baptized disciples ; Jesus, therefore, considered these little children as disciples, on account of their believing parents, on account of their own circumcision, and perhaps also on account of a baptism already received in company with their parents. Therefore “is the kingdom of heaven of such as these little children,” which implies that these infants already belonged to the kingdom, for *of such* means they and those like them, as in 1 Cor. v. 11 ; 1 Tim. vi. 5.

§ 121. **A great Baptist Miracle! There was**

not a single little Child in all the Families baptized in the Days of the Apostles.—Finally, we reach, in reference to the baptism of infants, a last class of facts. These are household baptisms. Although not numerous, they form a considerable portion of the accounts of baptism. Thus, in the Acts of the Apostles, we have ten distinct cases of baptism. Two only of these are baptisms of individuals in a state of celibacy, namely, those of Paul and the eunuch, who had no family, and were baptized in the most private manner, without so much as a witness. Four are multitudinous baptisms of crowds; namely, of the three thousand, the Samaritans, certain disciples of John, and the Corinthians. Then four more baptisms are those of family or household; namely, those of Cornelius, Lydia, the jailer of Philippi, and Crispus. To these four baptisms of families in the Acts must be added that of the household of Stephanus, mentioned by Paul in 1 Cor. i. 16. Finally, there are three more families whose baptism is not expressly mentioned, but is implied, for there are Christian households to which the Apostle sends salutations; namely, the houses of Onesiphorus, Aristobulus, and Narcissus.

All these household baptisms have in common the characteristic feature that they take place immediately and in great haste on the first assent given to the Gospel by the head of the house; and

in this particular they are the exact counterparts of the circumcision of Abraham with his household. In the account of one of these baptisms, that of the keeper of the prison, the translation has misled many to think that he believed with all his house, while the original says merely that he rejoiced with all his house, having believed. There is no mention whatever made of the faith of his house, but only of his joy amidst the family. It would be, indeed, rather unaccountable, if all the members of his family believed, that he alone of so many believers is reported to have rejoiced. But if they were baptized because he believed, it is natural they should joyfully participate in the feast that followed his baptism. Moreover, the original has, for "with all his house," but a single word, which is an adverb, *πανοικί*, the exact meaning of which is *by the houseful*. Now, justifying faith is too personal and too spiritual a thing for it to be said of any man that, during the brief space of part of one night, he repented by the houseful, believed by the houseful, was converted by the houseful, and was saved by the houseful. But this expression is used in Scripture with perfect propriety in reference to the baptism of a man, because baptism is far below justifying faith, and is the external token of the Christian family, imparted to children without requiring even their consent. The jailer, having believed, passed

rapidly from anxiety to confidence. He felt happy, prepared the table, and sat down to meat with the Apostles and with his family, all rejoicing together, although he alone had believed. (Acts xvi. 33, 34.)

The Greek word *Oikos*, employed by the Apostles to designate the households that were baptized, is one the meaning of which is perfectly ascertained in the Septuagint, that guide to the religious language of the writers of the New Testament. It means a family which contains little children, and here is an instance in point. "The *house* of Jacob, which came into Egypt were threescore and ten," and elsewhere, the "*households* of his sons" are reported to have included "their little ones and their wives." (Gen. xlv. 18, 19; xlv. 27.) Therefore, if there is any value to be set on the words of sacred writers, what the Apostles baptized, when baptizing a household, was a man with his wife and his little ones. To this must be added the important fact, that there is not in Scripture a single instance of the head of a family having been baptized without his household. The only two solitary baptisms are those of bachelors, Paul and the eunuch, made in private, and all the others are baptisms of households or crowds.

Now, in the face of such strong facts, the Baptists assert that there were no children in any of those households or families or crowds baptized by

the Apostles, — no, not even one single little child! But fortunately a mere assertion is no proof, especially when it seems as incredible as it is ridiculous. What queer households these first Christian families must have been! How barren! Not one child in the family of Cornelius, nor in that of Lydia, nor in that of the jailer of Philippi; amongst “all his” who are baptized, not one child! There is, again, the same desolation in the family of Crispus; then, also, in that of Stephanus, and in those of Aristobulus, Onesiphorus, and Narcissus! Of whom was composed the family of that poor Lydia, who must have been a widow because she was the head of her house? She has no husband, no children, and yet she has a family to follow her obediently through baptism! All this is decidedly so incredible that it must be considered on a par with the miracles of the Breviary. How credulous one must be to remain a Baptist!!

We have attempted to estimate the probability that there were no little children in these baptized households, and, after making the most liberal allowance to the Baptist hypothesis, here is the result. We find, that, out of four families or houses in an ordinary population, there are three at least with a child below seven years of age, and under that age Baptists would surely not baptize. If, then, the Apostles had baptized but one household, the proba-

bility that there would have been at least one child in that family is as 3 to 1. Taking two households into account, this probability is as 7 to 1. With five households it would be as 19 to 1; and with eight households as 31 to 1. The Pedobaptist opinion has, therefore, in reference to these household baptisms, just thirty-one times more probability than the Baptist view. Such a probability is equivalent to a certainty. It alone would suffice to justify the practice of infant baptism. But add to it the million of children baptized at the passing through the Red Sea, without speaking of the mass baptisms of the people under the Gospel, and then the certainty of infant baptism, simply as a matter of fact and independently of all command, doctrine, analogy, or opinion whatever, becomes an absolute certainty.

§ 122. **Some Indiscreet Questions addressed to Baptists.**—Having drawn our conclusions in relation to the baptism of infants, we wish we could question the Baptist reader, and ask him whether our proofs satisfy him or not, and what more he can desire. Perhaps he will attempt a last stand within the following intrenchment: I want for infant baptism a special command or a special example; without this, all other considerations will fail to convince me. Very well; but two can play at that game, and you will please allow us to exact from

you the same condition which you exact from us. We ask you, therefore, in our turn, for a special command against baptizing children, or at least for one instance of their being excluded from this rite by the Apostles. Show us in Scripture a single case of a parent baptized without his children! You cannot bring forward a single word of prohibition or a single instance of exclusion. We are thus quits; your objection is neutralized, and therefore of no avail.

You will further allow us to address to you a few indiscreet questions. Where is the command to baptize women? There is none; but there are two instances of such baptism, and this suffices you. To us, the example of so many more households baptized is also quite sufficient. Where do you find a single command or a single instance that women should participate in the Holy Supper? You impart it to them, however, on the strength of some considerations, some proofs of an order very inferior to those we have adduced for infant baptism. Where do you find a single command, or a single declaration, or a single instance to the effect that Sabbath has been transferred from the last day of the week to the first? For the fact that the Lord rose on that day, and that church meetings were held also on that day, proves nothing for a Sabbath observance. You insist, however, that the day shall

be observed, and you do right; but you base its sanction on proofs very much weaker than those of infant baptism. Whence do you draw your rule, on which all your church discipline rests, that the communion must be granted only to such as are baptized? The New Testament contains neither command nor example in reference to this. The Old Testament alone has a rule, that one must be circumcised in order to eat the Passover. Why do you apply the rule of circumcision to baptism, since you deny their relation? And, again, where do you find, in the New Testament, the command that a man should have but one wife? You are satisfied with Scriptural reasons against polygamy very inferior to those we have presented you in behalf of Pedobaptism. Mormons are far more consistent than you, or rather they are the only consistent Baptists, for they not only immerse their followers upon a profession of faith, but on the same principle they practise polygamy and do not observe the Christian Sabbath. According to your logic and your own principles, they are right and you are wrong. Since, without formal command or special example, you acknowledge so many things as rules of Scripture, binding on the conscience of the Christian, we urge you to be, if not consistent and logical, at least simply honest, and not again assert that, unless there be a formal and special command,

children ought not to be baptized. But we have the command of Jesus Christ to baptize nations; and the command which contains the whole contains also each part. You know that a nation is not a nation without the children; and yet you make an arbitrary exception to the command. The Bible does not make it. You follow the example of the priests of Rome when they take away the cup from laymen. Their exception is at least as well grounded as yours. But we cannot conscientiously accept your authority as worth more against the Bible than that of the priests of Rome.

§ 123. **In the Kingdom of God, as elsewhere, the Naturalization of a Parent always includes that of the Children.**— It is objected, that, if the baptism of infants is to be practised, it is singular that the Holy Ghost should have made no special mention of it. It is at least just as singular, that, if women are to take the communion, the Holy Ghost should have made no special mention of it, considering that Jesus Christ had given it only to males. It may seem singular to some minds, that all the members of a family should enter the house through one door, and that there should not be upon the street a special little door for the children. But to us it will appear still more singular to refuse entrance to children, because

the door through which the adults pass first is too big for little ones. Such superfluities as are demanded would be a blemish in the Word of God. Romanists might as well except from the reach of the second command their idolatrous worship of the infant Jesus, because there is no special command against worshipping children or their graven images. We have under our eyes the naturalization papers of a British subject, the head of a family. The document is long, goes into details, and is enacted according to the most strict legal form, and yet it does not contain a word about the wife and children of the naturalized father. According to Baptist logic he alone is British, while his wife and children still remain foreigners; but, according to the logic of common-sense and experience, the whole family is naturalized. The little children have not given a personal assent; they have not even been consulted. But they are subjects of the queen; they have entered into covenant with her through the act of their father. They are bound by their parent to be British subjects when adults, just as if they had themselves applied for naturalization. They may then refuse obedience to the laws of the empire; but in doing so they will be rebels, for their father has naturalized them. If they ever claim their right of British subjects, because made so

by their father, nobody will dispute the claim, or exact a new act of naturalization. The baptism of infants is just as clear and simple, just as much a matter of necessity, as the naturalization of infants with their father. It is not even easy to conceive how a father can be naturalized into the visible and external kingdom of God on earth, and yet leave his children outside. In the Christian as well as in the political kingdom the naturalization of a man must be invalidated by the very fact of his excepting his children; for his loyalty must be too partial to be recognized. He may mingle with the other subjects of the kingdom, and apparently enjoy all their privileges, but the legal document of his loyalty may all the time be wanting, and his children be sooner or later called to suffer for the neglect. If justifying faith is not needed for baptism, but only an external assent to the claims of the Christian religion, the parent is perfectly competent to give that assent for his child, and it is for the interest of the latter, as well as for the glory of God, that it should be done.

§ 124. **Infants did not eat the Passover any more than they now participate in the Communion, and these two Institutions correspond to each other just as Baptism and Circumcision.**

—The time has now come to take up a specious objection often made against infant baptism. It is said that, in the absence of any formal prohibition, the communion might be given to infants as well as baptism, and that it is an inconsistency on the part of Pedobaptists not to do so; for if baptism has taken the place of circumcision, so has the Lord's Supper taken that of the Passover, which latter the children used to eat with their parents. We fully admit that the Lord's Supper corresponds to the Passover, for "Christ is our Passover," says Scripture. And the primitive Church for a considerable time observed the Passover as well as the Lord's Supper, just as circumcision was retained by the side of baptism. It was only after the lapse of time that the two signs of the Old Covenant fell into disuse, and were replaced by the corresponding signs of the New. But we utterly deny that infants ate the Passover, although almost every Baptist work makes the assertion. It is true that children participated in it; but what children? Children who questioned, who argued, and who received religious instruction from the head of the family (Exodus xii. 26, 27; xiii. 8, 9, 14); children who obeyed the commands of God, for no other were permitted to eat the Passover; children who were capable of having their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and their staff in

their hand, and who could sit up all night thus equipped and in a state of watchfulness (xii. 11). All Evangelical churches will give the communion to such children. Let us add, that the Lord's Supper is a commemoration, — that is to say, a remembrance of the past, a remembrance of the death of Christ for such as have already experienced the effects of it, and have already known their Master; this alone excludes infants and little ones through sheer incapacity of participating in this remembrance. Circumcision and baptism, on the contrary, refer both to the future; it is the entrance into a covenant of promises which are not yet realized. The Passover and the Holy Supper both refer to the past, as the remembrance of an accomplished fact; namely, the exodus from Egypt and the salvation through the blood of the Lamb. Baptists have failed to see the magnificent arrangement by which the two sacraments, first under the Old then under the New Covenant, complete each other, mutually fit and answer to one another as the two symbolic halves of one religion, the one pointing to the future and the other to the past. They have flattened down this divine structure; they have rendered insipid the spiritual and relative meaning of baptism and the Holy Supper, by binding both to the past and to the same fact, the death of Christ. And they have added to

their spurious baptism the stamp of absurdity, by asserting that a whole ignorant people was buried by baptism with Jesus Christ, years before the Saviour died, and before his nearest disciples had even understood that he was to die and be buried for the redemption of their sins.

But these remarks lead us to a closer investigation of the innermost spiritual meaning of baptism, and to this the next chapter will be devoted.

CHAPTER XIV.

INNERMOST MEANING AND VALUE OF BAPTISM.

§ 125. **Vagueness, Diversity, and Contradictions amongst both Baptists and Pedobaptists, as to the Spiritual Value of Baptism.** — What is the use of baptism? What is it worth? What grace does it impart? What is the risk in dispensing with it? In a word, what is its religious value? It seems as if the answer to this question should have been the first point considered in this work, and that it is necessary to know first what a ceremony is worth before undertaking long investigations concerning it. But the importance attached to the subject was sufficiently justified from the first by the sad contentions it has caused; and one result of our investigations is the power correctly to determine its precise worth in a Biblical point of view.

Unfortunately great vagueness prevails as to the religious value of baptism, and it is under the cover of this misty vagueness that a great variety of opin-

ions have arisen, which testify to the general uncertainty on this subject. Quakers altogether reject the baptism of water, and recognize only the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Socinians see in baptism only a ceremony of initiation to Christianity for Jewish and heathen proselytes, and declare that baptism should not be given to the children of Christian parents. Socinians are therefore a Baptist sect. Zwingle recognizes in baptism only an external mark of admission into the Church. Calvin sees in it a grace received at the moment of performance, but on condition of faith, without which the grace is not imparted. Luther places in the rite a grace independent of faith, and inherent to the word of consecration ; baptism, moreover, at the moment when performed, takes away the penalty of original sin. The Episcopal Church, in England and in the United States, is still discussing whether baptismal regeneration is necessarily part of its doctrine or not. Romanists make baptism a condition of salvation, and connect with its reception a magical grace, an *opus operatum* ; the Greeks, without being so precise, follow at a distance the baptismal doctrine of Rome. As to the Protestant Pedobaptists of France and Switzerland, they hold at present a variety of opinions on baptism, all extremely indefinite, and thus highly favorable to the spread of Baptist principles. The same might be said to some extent of

English and American Pedobaptists. The want of careful discrimination in some passages between the baptism of water and the baptism of the Holy Ghost opens a wide range for attributing to the rite various degrees of mysterious efficacy short of baptismal regeneration, although this latter is the only true result of the confusion of the two baptisms.

It is not astonishing that this vagueness, this uncertainty, these diversities, and these contradictions in Pedobaptism, disgust many evangelical Christians, and carry them over to Anabaptism, where they imagine they shall find perspicuity, precision, and the absence of all sacramental mysticism. But here again disappointment awaits them. They will find that the system rests upon the outward form, but that the spiritual idea of baptism is as vague and indefinite there as elsewhere. They will find that, amongst Baptists, some hold to the idea of Zwingle, while others see in baptism a spiritual conformity to the death of Christ; others, a burial, literal, real, and material; others, a special grace conferred; others, a simple act of obedience, without the communication of any special grace; others, baptismal regeneration; finally, all attach to it an excessive importance, which raises baptism to the level of the fundamental doctrines. We have just mentioned Baptists as believing in baptismal regeneration. Let this astonish no one; it is the

culminating point towards which the whole Baptist system tends, and where it is always sure to arrive sooner or later. A large division of American Baptists, very active and very respectable, is now constituted on this very basis. These are the Campbellites, who number already about four hundred thousand, and who have it for their doctrinal device that water-baptism and regeneration are one and simultaneous, and that baptism is essential to salvation. The other Baptist sects are not quite so far advanced in theory; but in practice they have already, with little exception, reached this platform, and in their eyes a man is truly a Christian only after having undergone immersion. Anabaptism is thus the great bridge by which to return from Protestantism to Romanism, through sacramental regeneration. We say nothing here of Mormon Baptists and of the old Anabaptists, to whom baptism by immersion is the initiation to carnal life.

§ 126. **The only Escape from Uncertainty offered by the Bible is to connect Baptism with Circumcision.** — Now there is one way, and only one Scriptural way, to fix with precision the true meaning of baptism, and to avoid this labyrinth of vague, mystical, or superstitious opinions, and that is to connect it closely with circumcision. This is what we have already done; and we need

not return here to our proofs. Circumcision had a clear and precise meaning. It was the seal of an alliance concluded between the Lord and the family of a believer ; a solemn ratification, a symbolical expression of that covenant ; an engagement on the part of the head of the house, binding both him and his to the service of the Lord ; a religious promise for the future. Now, we say that baptism is this, — all this, and nothing but this. It differs from circumcision only because it relates to another covenant ; but it binds to that new covenant, in the same manner, and with the same results, as circumcision bound to the old. It is neither more nor less than the sign of a covenant. We go still further, and assert, that if baptism does not hold under the New Covenant the place which circumcision held under the old, its value becomes unknown. The New Testament not having fixed this value, baptism will be whatever you please. It will be like one of those gutta-percha figures which you can by pulling cause to assume any shape and any expression. Baptism will have to undergo, as indeed it does already, all sorts of modifications to suit various doctrines, systems, or ecclesiastical forms. Tertullian, Socinus, Luther, Mennon, Carson, Campbell, Rome, and the Mormons can each and all set up their views with impunity ; for to their baptisms can only be opposed other theories, more or less plau-

sible, but which are at best only probabilities, unsupported by Scriptural proof.

§ 127. **The Grace of Covenant imparted through Baptism.** — If we are asked, Does baptism confer any special grace, or does it save? we answer, As much as circumcision, and no more. Circumcision, well understood, was a great privilege and blessing to a family, for by it God was bound to the parent and also to the child who received it. The Lord had connected his promises with the token of covenant. This condition once fulfilled by the parent, the Lord was solemnly bound by his own promise. But the special grace imparted by God did not consist in an internal change of the soul, effected suddenly at the moment of circumcision. There was neither magic nor sacramental virtue in the ceremony. No, not any more than in the seal which is affixed to a treaty, or in the flag hoisted on a foreign land as a sign of taking possession. The grace, consisting in an engagement on the part of God, commenced with the sign, in order to last during the whole life, or at least as long as there was no open rebellion or positive unfaithfulness on the part of the circumcised. The grace was like that of a treaty or a political alliance which confers certain privileges. The privilege becomes operative from

the moment the treaty is duly signed and sealed, and in that sense the signature and the seal confer the grace; but it is only the beginning of a grace, which may be developed and confirmed by time and practice, or which, on the contrary, may grow weaker, and become ineffective by neglect and unfaithfulness. Such, on the part of God, is the grace of baptism; it is easily understood, and from this simple point of view there is room in that ordinance for neither mysticism nor sacramental superstition.

This grace of baptism has been very much exaggerated both by Romanists and Baptists. The former hold it to be indispensable to the salvation of a child; the latter, by making it an effective burial with Christ, have also unavoidably made it the principal sacrament. While the Holy Supper is but a remembrance of the death of Christ, their baptism is that death itself, dramatically undergone by the believer. But it is when considered in connection with their discipline that the sacramental virtue, the *opus operatum*, which they unconsciously attribute to baptism, is most clearly seen. Previous to having received immersion, the most pious and devoted servant of God is considered too unfaithful a Christian to be allowed the communion or the privileges of the Church of Christ. Before the Lord's table he is ranked

with infidels, and forbidden to commemorate the Saviour's death. But let him consent to be plunged, and the moment he has undergone the Baptist ceremony he becomes suddenly a good Christian, and is entitled to all the privileges of the kingdom of God. Now, immersion must have transformed the moral character of that man, instantaneously changing him from a bad man into a good Christian. This is truly a miracle wrought by the Baptist minister, and very similar to that of the priest in the mass. In both cases, the testimony of experience and of the senses, which affirm that the bread remains the same, and that the man is the same after as before his immersion, is rejected, in order to enhance the fictitious value of the ceremony.

§ 128. **The Baptism of the whole Family has most important Results upon the Education of Children.** — Besides the grace of closer relation to God by means of baptism, there is another subordinate one in reference to the Christian family-life. Circumcision did not only bind the child to God, it also bound the parent to the child. The latter, in consequence of the token of covenant, was obliged to obey the Lord from his earliest youth; he had to be brought up in the fear of God, to consider him as his Master, to feel bound by a

former engagement to be his, and to regard disobedience to his commands in the light of a rebellion, the infraction of a family compact, the breaking of a sacred covenant. This view was a most elevated one, and so highly beneficial to religious education that nothing could replace it; and yet it is this magnificent domestic privilege which Baptists would take away from us! Baptism places us in precisely the same religious position towards children as circumcision formerly did; and, had it been otherwise, it is certain that the latter would never have given way to the former, but would have been maintained to this day. Clearly for this reason are parents told "to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. vi. 4), or, more correctly, according to the original, "in the discipline and teaching of the Lord." But this discipline, or rather this discipleship, of the child implies a covenant, a taking possession of the little ones by the Lord, as belonging to the household of faith; otherwise it could not exist, or at least would be but an unconditional slavery, without reward or promise. For this reason, again, does Peter speak of baptism as "the pledge of a good conscience toward God." (See 1 Pet. iii. 21 in the original.) In effect, baptism binds man and pledges him with his offspring to a Christian life, which must be

realized first in his own family. The baptism of the whole household is so really included in that of the head of the family, that Holy Writ, in relating such baptisms, deviates from the ordinary mode of language, and, instead of saying, “*they* were baptized,” states that “*he* was baptized,—he and all his” (Acts xvi. 33),—the baptism of his family being treated only as a necessary part of his own.

§ 129. **It is False that a Child has no Religion.**—Since infant baptism exerts a blessed influence upon the education of the family, it must be inferred that a consistent Pedobaptist household is the best regulated of any. There alone can paternal authority claim its full and legitimate sphere. The Pedobaptist father, like Abraham and Joshua, has imposed his religion upon his family, and made them by paternal authority the disciples of the Lord. On the other hand, the wide spread of Baptist principles is not without its influence upon that early emancipation of children and disregard of parental authority which so often painfully strikes the European visitor in America.

Baptism implies the adoption of a religion, not only for the person baptized, but for the house of which he is or may become the head, as far as his authority extends. This is not only a doctrinal, but

also an experimental truth. Nothing can be more false than the notion that a child may remain without adopting a religion until he is an adult. The celebrated Jean Jacques Rousseau, in his *Emile*, has carried out this Baptist idea, and it is known what a sad failure it has proved. A child has always some kind of a religion, borrowed from those who educate him. The child of the Jew is a Jew, the child of the Romanist is a Romanist, the child of the heathen is a heathen,—this is seen everywhere. The very earliest education of a child, even when silence upon religious subjects is observed in his presence, will always reflect the principles of his educators, and imply some belief, true or false, like theirs. Many children of Christian parents, even at the early age of three or four years, have a faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that is infinitely superior to that of the ignorant and hardened crowds which John baptized. Now the child of a Christian being neither a Jew nor a heathen, we ask, What is his religion, unless it be the Christian religion? and then, why deny to him the external sign of a covenant that he is compelled to keep?

§ 130. **The Faith of Parents is efficacious towards their Children, and by Baptism is confirmed and receives a determinate Impulse.**— This excessive aversion to let the faith of parents

extend over children, and operate in their behalf, may appear eminently spiritual to some; but the fact is, that it is very carnal, that it is an ill-disguised unbelief, for the Gospel exhibits by many striking incidents the spiritual efficacy of the faith of parents in behalf of their children. Now it is the faith of a father, now that of a mother, which delivers a child from the possession of a devil that vexed him (Matt. xv. 22; xvii. 18); and the faith of the parent operates most effectually by simply presenting the child with confidence to the Lord. Now it is the faith of the master of the house that avails to cure his servant. (Matt. viii. 1.) And, again, it is the faith of believing parents, who force their way to Jesus in spite of the opposition of mistaken disciples, which procures to their little ones a special blessing from the Saviour. Thus we find in the Gospels numerous instances of the faith of parents, masters, and protectors operating for the spiritual benefit of their charge, and why then in the name of individual faith take umbrage at the baptism of infants? Through these incidents the Gospel affords for the faith of the parent, acting instead and in behalf of the child, a scope far more ample than is required for infant baptism. Only an external assent to Christianity is needed, which any parent not an infidel is entirely competent to give for his child, and which will be bind

ing upon him as a matter of fact and experience, as well as of doctrine.

§ 131. **Whatever Exertions are made to smuggle Children into the Covenant, they are never deprived of Baptism with perfect Impunity.**—

We shall probably be told that many Baptist parents bring up their children in the fear of the Lord, without having conferred baptism upon them. This is true, and is a very happy inconsistency. It is a silent admission of the truth of Pedobaptism to endeavor to bring one's children into the covenant of God as it were contraband, and without resorting to the ordinance which he has prescribed for their introduction into it. When the thing itself is desired, it is at least unfair to raise so many objections to the sign that represents its possession. Why impose one's religion upon a child, and imagine that the claims of individual faith are saved by refusing him the badge of the service to which he is compelled!

But, again, it will be said, that these unbaptized children do not fare any worse than others; that the religious influence is precisely the same for them as if they had been baptized. This we deny; there is an important difference. A simple promise is not equal to an oath. The holding of a property in the absence of all regular titles

and forms can never be equal to its possession according to the rules of the kingdom, with signature and seal. There is always an uncertainty and a secret suspicion of a flaw in the title, and this feeling, which cannot be altogether banished, spoils the enjoyment of the property ; it does not, perhaps, destroy, but it at least mars its benefits, and lessens the value of the whole. A Christian who voluntarily and on principle abstains from the Lord's Supper, as do the Quakers, may boast that he possesses Jesus Christ and the sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost as fully as his evangelical brethren, and yet there is a difference which sooner or later will manifest itself by unfavorable results. Experience shows that one can be an excellent and devoted Christian, and yet abstain for conscience' sake from ever partaking of the Lord's Supper, but it is nevertheless true that Jesus Christ has instituted that sacrament for the good of the faithful, and that it cannot be neglected with perfect impunity. The faith of a pious Quaker would only be the more lively, and his spiritual enjoyment the greater, if he could participate in this holy ceremony. This conscientious abstaining is after all a blemish in his Christian character, and an element of weakness in his piety. It is the same thing with the neglect of infant baptism. The Baptist parent may be as devout a Christian as the Quaker ; he may even,

with a happy inconsistency, rear his children under the holy influences of the Covenant, while denying to them its sign, and they, notwithstanding this neglect, may inherit the piety of their parent; but nevertheless a means of grace intended for them has been set aside or postponed, and their spiritual advantages have been so far diminished and set in danger. If the piety of many Baptist brethren is a sufficient proof that infant baptism may be neglected with impunity, so may the piety of many Quakers be considered an equal proof against the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. The parent who causes his child to be baptized, contracts before God and man a solemn engagement, which strengthens faith and the sense of Christian duty in the education of the family. The omission of the sign may only diminish in the minds of some parents the feeling of religious responsibility towards their offspring, but in others it will totally destroy it. The result in any case will prove injurious to the family; the consequences may not be developed immediately, it may be years before they become apparent, but then they will be serious and irreparable.

§ 132. **God takes Baptist Parents at their Word, and their Children do the same.**—There is another mischievous consequence resulting from the neglect of the baptism of children, and which

unfailingly manifests itself in them as soon as they are old enough to think. It is impossible to conceal from them the fact that they have not been baptized, while other children have. Although unable fully to appreciate the import of baptism, yet they feel that they are placed in an exceptional position, that the children of other evangelical families are one step in advance of them in the external profession of Christianity. They question their parents, and soon ascertain that they are on a level with the unconverted world, and that until the distant and uncertain event of their becoming believers takes place, Christian duties are not and cannot be binding upon them. They understand very well that their parents have placed them outside the covenanted obligations of the Gospel, and that they differ from the children of heathen only by a greater knowledge. With children of a happy and docile temperament, this dangerous feeling may not obtain the mastery, and they may in spite of it attach themselves to their parents' religion. But in the majority of cases, it will strengthen the natural repulsion of the heart to the Gospel, extinguish the sense of religious duty which parents will in vain strive to awake, and the child will persistently remain exactly where his parents have placed him, — outside the covenant of the Lord, its customs and its obligations. Indeed, this feeling will often

deepen into aversion to the Gospel. One needs only to live in a place where Baptists are numerous to become convinced by personal observation of the truth of these facts. Indeed, these alarming results are so evident as to prevent many parents from openly turning Baptists, although pretty much so in theory. This explains also why Baptist sects have ever been unable to sustain themselves by means of conversions from the world or from the children of Baptist families. They are always making inroads upon other evangelical churches, and seeking to recruit from amongst them disciples, whom they profess to baptize for the first time by immersing them after years of conversion and Christian life. It is even confidently asserted, that, on an average, four fifths of the members of Baptist churches were baptized in childhood, and afterwards re-baptized, which shows how much that Pedobaptism has been blessed to them which they foolishly imagine it their conscientious duty to spurn. Let all the Christian churches of a given country become Baptist, and let them thus lose the opportunity of recruiting their members amongst Pedobaptists, and the decline of these churches will be rapid, while the country returns gradually to heathenism and unbelief.

§ 133. **By calling Baptism a Righteousness,**

the Lord places it on a Level with the Ceremonies of Purification in the Old Testament.

— Our Lord Jesus Christ calls the baptism of water *a righteousness*. (Matt. iii. 15.) This expression, which must not be confounded with the righteousness of faith, casts some light on the value of baptism. Righteousness is an expression borrowed from the Old Testament, which expresses the external duties of religion according to the law. (Deut. vi. 25.) Circumcision was a righteousness, and our Saviour, because the son of man, had to receive it, although in some sense it was unworthy of him. In the same manner and for the same reason he received baptism; because this ceremony is “a righteousness, and it becometh him to fulfil it.” But the expression used here by our Saviour implies also that baptism is connected with the Old Testament as an external purification of the flesh, ordained by the law of Moses, and only such a water baptism could Christ receive with any propriety, as he had no sins to repent of, like the rest of the people that were baptized. In that sense also does Peter understand the baptism of water, and he speaks of it with little reverence, as a ceremony “for the putting away of the filth of the flesh.” (1 Pet. iii. 21.) From this point of view, it is easily seen how fitting it was that a Gentile be introduced to the kingdom of God by a baptism which

would symbolically purify his flesh from its ceremonial defilement. We see why the Apostles, being Jews, would never teach a Gentile until after he was baptized, and why their Master commanded them to follow that rule, "Baptize and teach." We understand also how, as a purification of the flesh, baptism is appropriate to infants, who are the flesh and bone of their parents, and who, being born in corruption and defiled, need very early that same symbolic and lustral purifying. This is, indeed, the lowest aspect of baptism, but it is one set forth by the Lord and by Peter, and one which must never be lost sight of while endeavoring to take a higher view of the rite. Moreover, as a ceremonial righteousness, baptism should not be denied to infants, for no one has yet asserted that babes should not be washed until they are old enough to appreciate the advantages of cleanliness. They must be washed for the parents' sake if not for their own, and baptism is after all a religious washing of the flesh, and not of the soul.

§ 134. **The Baptism of Fire is not that of the Holy Ghost, but is the Baptism of Hell.**— John the Baptist said, "Jesus Christ shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire," and the Jacobites, thinking to be very Scriptural, take this passage as literally and materially as the Baptists

do that on the burial with Christ by baptism. Accordingly they do not baptize without marking, with a red-hot iron, a cross on the forehead of their children. Their practice is fully as justifiable and as Scriptural as that of immersion.

Fire and the Holy Ghost have generally been understood in this passage as synonymous, or at least as referring to the same spiritual baptism. This view seems confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Ghost received at Pentecost, where tongues of fire were seen to rest on the heads of the Apostles. We must, however, differ from the common interpretation, and see in the baptism of fire the opposite of that of the Holy Ghost, namely, the baptism of Hell. We consider that sound criticism compels us to accept this interpretation, which is in fact given by John himself. For he has no sooner mentioned this baptism of fire, than he immediately states in a parallel sentence what he means by the fire with which the Messiah is to baptize. "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire;— he will gather his wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." (Matt. iii. 11, 12.) There is no reason for taking the word fire in two totally different meanings in the same passage, and therefore John evidently means a baptism of unquenchable fire. Indeed, this throws a beautiful light on the spiritual and symbolical sense of bap-

tism. Christ is both to save and to judge the world ; he is himself to baptize every man ; no one will escape from his baptism, — a baptism of the Spirit and of mercy to the one, a baptism of fire and damnation to the other, and both these future baptisms of Christ were prefigured in the water-baptism of John. Had the fire been mentioned here only as a qualification of the Holy Ghost, John would scarcely have spoken the truth to the crowds around him, in promising them this baptism of spiritual grace, for very few of them indeed received it. But there is an awful and stern reality in his preaching to the people that their expected Messiah is coming to purify the world, for such is the essential meaning of the word *baptize* (§ 78). He shall indeed purify either by the Spirit or by fire, either by mercifully washing away their sin, or by burning it in the unquenchable fire of damnation ; but through one or other of these two baptisms shall the world pass and be purified. The same idea may be implied in the tongues of fire, symbolic of the mission of the Apostles, whose tongues cannot preach mercy without also implying damnation to those who remain hardened.

This idea of purifying, which is the predominant one in the word baptize, throws a spiritual light on several passages. For instance, take these words, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,”

(Mark xvi. 16,) and substitute purify for baptize, and you read, "He that believeth and is purified shall be saved." A meaning as simple as it is beautiful, referring to the spiritual purification of sin by the agency of the Holy Ghost. Again, the baptism for the dead, ordered by Moses and alluded to by Paul, means that purification is necessary after contact with the dead. This world is a world of the dead ; it is defiled by sin, and death is the consummation of sin. Christian baptism is a baptism for the dead ; it expresses the spiritual idea that man, nay, the very infant, is defiled by contact with the world, and by belonging to it, and that he needs to be purified by Christ before he can draw near to God.

§ 135. **The Baptism of the Gospel is intended to prepare the Way for the Coming of the Lord, and, as such, suits Infants better than any other Class.** — The baptism practised by John the Baptist was intended to prepare for the coming of the Lord ; this is an essential feature of the ordinance, which deserves our attention. The mission of John consisted in being the Forerunner of Jesus Christ, and was wholly symbolized in his baptism. He baptized the people that they might be prepared to receive the Messiah, and his baptism is considered as the very beginning of the Gospel. (Mark i. 1.) When

the eleven Apostles met to elect the twelfth, the man of their choice must be a witness of all the facts of the Gospel, "beginning from the baptism of John." (Acts i. 22.) Finally, we have the declaration of John himself: "And I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water." (John i. 31.) He baptizes, therefore, with reference to a Saviour not yet revealed, and for the express purpose of making him manifest to those whom he was baptizing. According to the Baptist view, he should have baptized only in reference to a Saviour already manifest and crucified, so that he might have buried the people into his death. But no; the Gospel places baptism before the manifestation of Jesus Christ, for which it is intended to prepare the way. This leading object is attained by infant baptism, while it is missed by baptism after faith. Little children are, like the Jewish people, in a state of expectancy of a religion which is about to be made manifest unto them, and for the reception of which it is proper they should be prepared, and prepared according to the Gospel, by baptism. As Jesus Christ ordains it in his commission to the Apostles, they must be made disciples; that is to say, they must be introduced into the Covenant by being first baptized and then taught. Baptism is the beginning of the beginning of the Gospel, the very first step, and that step only

one of preparation. Blessed be the parent who in the first days of his child is anxious to prepare him by this initiatory ordinance for an early reception of Jesus Christ!

§ 136. **The Gospel knows no other Baptism than that of the Called, who have not yet obtained the Remission of Sins.** — The baptism of John was identified with his preaching. “He has preached the baptism of repentance,” says Scripture in many places. And he preached that baptism and conferred it for the remission of sins. (Mark i. 4, 5.) Observe that he did not baptize, as Baptists do, those who were thought to have already obtained remission of sins, but a totally different class, — those who were seeking that remission, and who resorted to baptism as a means to obtain it. Baptism by water was therefore the symbol of the preaching to the unconverted, and an effective instrument for calling sinners to the Saviour, who would impart to them the true washing of sins figured by that of water. The moment a man was pricked in his heart at the hearing of the Gospel, and asked, What shall I do? he was answered, Receive the baptism of repentance as the first step towards obtaining remission of sins. Then persevere, be faithful to the pledge of thy baptism, and thou shalt find what thou seekest,

even the gift of the Holy Ghost. Such is the language which Peter holds to the three thousand who were baptized in one day. (Acts ii. 37, 38.) This is also the language of Ananias at the baptism of the alarmed but unconverted Paul: "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (xxii. 16.) Thus the Gospel knows only a baptism of the called, but the Baptists only a baptism of the elect, which is even farther removed from truth than Mass is from the Holy Supper.

§ 137. **No Theory of Baptism is true unless it fully accounts for the Haste and Precipitancy of the Apostles to confer it.**—Let us connect here with this preaching by baptism another very remarkable fact, — that of the great haste with which that ordinance was applied, and which we have noticed elsewhere. We have seen that baptism was never refused to any one who applied for it; for, although John said to the Pharisees who came to him, "O generation of vipers!" there is no indication nor probability that he refused baptism to any of them. Neither did they ask it, for they had no confidence in it; they secretly despised it and left it to the common people. We have ascertained, moreover, that there is not one single instance of a man baptized later than the very day and the very hour

when he gave his first assent to the preaching of the Gospel. In the night, amidst the ruins of a prison which had just crumbled on its foundations, the household of the jailer hear for the first time the preaching of the Gospel, and they listen. STRAIGHTWAY, at the very instant (*παραχρῆμα*), without waiting for daylight, without preparations, without catechizing, the jailer is baptized with all his. If, as Baptists assert, this baptism was an immersion, the precipitancy is far more remarkable; for supposing, which is impossible, that the prison of a Roman province enjoyed the comfort of a bath-room, it must have been at any rate difficult, amidst the confusion of that terrible night, to clear the rubbish and to procure the immense quantity of water necessary. On the other hand, if the jailer sent to awake the inhabitants of the town in the middle of the night, to borrow from them instantly a large tub capable of accommodating at least two persons, it would show still more the immense importance which the Apostles felt that there should not be the slightest delay in the performance of baptism.

All the narratives of baptism found in Scripture witness to the same precipitancy. They all convey the same idea of haste: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized!" (Acts xxii. 16.) Were we to admit, with Baptists, the baptism of

believers only, Scripture will even then declare, "*When* they believed they were baptized." (Acts viii. 12.) At the very moment they believe what they are told about Jesus Christ, they are baptized without delay. But the Baptist practice is in direct opposition to this, and would alter Scripture to "*After* they had believed for some time, they were baptized." It is owing to this precipitancy, to this Apostolic duty of haste, that there is not a single instance in Scripture of a baptism performed at a meeting of the church, or by a special appointment made beforehand, as is the practice with Baptists, who make of this rite a public profession of faith similar to that of the Lord's Supper. Baptism was performed on the spot where it was first thought of, in the private household, or in the desert, or on the road-side. It was often given without any witnesses, as in the case of Paul and that of the eunuch. This ordinance was as domestic and as private as that of circumcision, of which it takes the place.

This promptitude, this haste, this precipitancy, forms therefore a characteristic feature of the ordinance of baptism. Any theory of baptism, to be credible, is bound fully to account for this invariable fact, to explain it, and to show how such a practice necessarily results from the doctrine. But neither Baptists nor Pedobaptists seem to have taken the slightest notice of this important element of doc-

trine and practice in their baptism of adults after faith. Where the Apostles have practised haste and precipitancy, they place delay, waiting, examination, and discipline; but surely it is not the Apostles who were mistaken. The attempt has been made to explain away this haste, by saying that the Apostles had the power to read the heart, and for this reason needed no probation of the convert's faith. But even this would not account for the extreme haste displayed; moreover, all apostolical precedents for baptism, or anything else, would be invalidated and become of no avail to us, if it were once admitted that miraculous powers dictated all their actions, and that, instead of imitating them, we must act differently. Finally, it is not true that in baptism they could read men's hearts, for even in this ordinance they were deceived. Philip hastened to baptize Simon Magus, who proved a few moments afterwards to have been a hypocrite.

The great systematizer and observer of facts, Agassiz, says: "The criterion of a true theory consists in the facility with which it accounts for facts accumulated in the course of long-continued investigations, and for which the existing theories afforded no explanation." This is as true of the facts of the Bible as of those of nature. Now, our doctrine on baptism is the only one which will satisfactorily account for the great fact of haste, and this is a confir-

mation of its truth and genuineness. This haste is explained only when baptism is, like circumcision, an initiation to a covenant, — a solemn pledge, a treaty concluded with the Lord, the first tie of the Gospel, the earliest bond between God and the family, which precedes justifying faith and leads to it.

§ 138. **The Haste to baptize finds its Analogy and its Justification in the Enlistment of the Soldier by the Recruiter.** — We find this same haste practised by men in other circumstances, which explain its motive and its object. When you exert yourself to convince a man that he should do this or that thing, you hasten to take advantage of the first moment when his resistance is shaken, or when conviction manifests itself, to bind him by a promise, or by a signature placed at the foot of a document; for you know that the obtaining of his signature is a great point gained. He is pledged to a certain course by his signature and seal, in a far different and stronger manner than by a mere verbal assent, which might easily be revoked. Again, when you seek to enlist a soldier in the service of the king, (and Christians are the soldiers of Christ,) you speak to him, you set before him the advantages of the service of the king, and it is usual, on the very first mark of assent, to hasten to enlist him, by handing to him the shilling which is the symbol of

his enlistment. He fully understands that accepting your shilling pledges him and his family, if he has any. After being solemnly pledged, however, he is a soldier only in perspective, for he must be taught. After his enlistment he finds himself a military disciple, and only later can he expect, if he perseveres, to be incorporated into a regiment. Thus the Christian receives first the pledge of baptism, then he is taught; after which he may be received, if worthy, as a member of this or that church. This figure of the soldier, which is strictly Biblical, perfectly unravels to us the importance of haste in conferring the sign of the Covenant. This haste is for the interest of the service, for the interest of the king, and even for that of the future soldier, if the service is to be advantageous to him. By neglecting to impart the token immediately on the very first opportunity, many excellent recruits would be lost to the kingdom; and although all who have undergone the formality of enlistment do not approve themselves good soldiers, although many show little disposition to be taught and trained, although many more become unfaithful and desert, still it remains true that there is great advantage in promptly binding by a symbol any one who feels disposed to enter the blessed service of the King of kings.

Another instance of the same haste is supplied us by the missionaries of temperance societies, who

preach to the crowd and centre all the efforts of their eloquence upon one point, that of bringing their hearers to sign a pledge, or to make a solemn promise by means of some symbolical signs, deemed efficacious to bind their conscience more than simple words. This token of pledge it is considered important to administer immediately at the close of preaching, and before the meeting breaks up. Haste is made to bind the people before their compunction has time to cool down ; and this haste is displayed by the preachers, not only from zeal for the cause, but also in the well-meant interest of the hearers, so as to fix permanently the impressions received, and transform a conviction more or less vague into a positive and real fact. The pledge of the parent extends also, of course, to his little ones, who have not been consulted, nor will it be deemed inappropriate if they bear the same badge with their father, considering they are all together enlisted in the same cause.

§ 139. **This Haste to enlist the Unconverted is an essential Feature of Baptism, and forms just the Reverse of the Baptist Practice.** — Such is the reason why the Apostles always hastened to confer baptism at the close of their preaching, and urged their hearers to take that step before separating. This promptitude was for the good of souls

and for the glory of the Master. They ever made it a point to change a recent and vague assent to the Gospel into a fact and a reality which would bind their hearers. The object was "to compel them to come in," (Luke xiv. 23,) willing or unwilling, to commit them to the cause of Jesus Christ, to hurry them by the bridge of baptism within the covenanted precincts of the kingdom, to bind them to the discipline of the Gospel, they and theirs, by a solemn and symbolical pledge, which should be irrevocable. They must be urged to an act of adherence to the Gospel, and must also be supplied with the most prompt and ready means of definitely declaring themselves. They were first enlisted as disciples by baptism, then bound to the teaching of Gospel truth; then, when they were favored with the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and had identified themselves with Christ by a living faith, they were admitted to the Holy Supper and to the participation of all the privileges of the Church.

§ 140. **The Grace of Calling conferred by Baptism.**—The Gospel narrative informs us that John the Baptist, very unlike the Baptists, baptized first and then preached his baptism; namely, the doctrines of repentance and remission of sins by the Lamb of God, to those whom he had baptized. "John did baptize and preach the baptism."

And he preached, saying, I indeed have baptized you with water," etc. (Mark i. 4, 7, 8.) The greater number of those he baptized did not persevere, and ultimately drew back, for there were many called, but few elect,—few true disciples, ready to endure persecution and to join the small, new-born churches. They had, however, received by baptism a special grace of calling, which turned to the benefit of several. Thus the Gospel narrates that "all the people that heard Jesus, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him." (Luke vii. 29, 30.) The people and the publicans were not regenerated believers, but the baptism they had received had done them good, brought them one step nearer the truth, committed them to welcome Jesus. They listened accordingly with pleasure and profit to the teaching of Christ, while that teaching was unprofitable to those who had not received the baptism of repentance. This grace of calling is also imparted to little children through the baptism that their Christian parents secure to them. It is a grace of the future, which is developed and perfected with the growth of the child. Parents thus place their child from his early youth in the position of one called, of a disciple. They bring him up as such,

train him in the practice of the rules of the covenant, that is to say, in the discipline of the Gospel; then, at a later period, explain to him that he is bound to the service of God, having been consecrated to him from his earliest days. There is in this a blessed influence and a precious privilege, which sincere Christians never discard unless through ignorance, and because they have not sufficiently understood the nature of their relations with the Lord.

§ 141. **Although the Time most propitious to Baptism is before Faith, it had better be received late than never.**—It follows from the above, that for an adult who was never baptized, the most propitious time to receive baptism is that of the first religious awakening of his soul. At a later period, and after he has obtained the baptism of the Holy Ghost, that of water becomes to him of less spiritual value. Yet for all this it ought not to be neglected, the external reception of the token of covenant is always advantageous, as an act of consecration to the Lord, as an example, and because, as said Jesus Christ, it is becoming thus to fulfil all righteousness. He whose baptism has been retarded is like a volunteer who fights by the side of the other soldiers without having been embodied into a regiment. If all did the same,

disorder and anarchy would soon prevail. The sooner his name is inscribed on the roll, the sooner he sets himself right, the sooner he submits to the form of taking an oath of allegiance which has long been in his heart, the better for him and for the service. This remark applies also to parents, who through doubt or indifference may have neglected the baptism of their children. The sooner they submit to the ordinance of the Lord, the better it will be for them, for their families, and for the Church.

§ 142. **It is as a Sign of the Future, and the Seal of a Covenant, that Baptism is conferred but once.**—Baptism is administered but once to the same individual, precisely because it is a sign of the future, the token of a pledge taken once for all, and which the whole life must realize and carry out. This predominant idea of a pledge in baptism explains why the Apostle said to the Corinthians, “Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” which means, When I baptized you, did I pledge you to me or to Christ? Baptists have made of this ordinance the same thing as the Lord’s Supper, a figure of the past, the external and carnal burial with Christ of him who has already been buried spiritually with his Saviour. Such a view would require baptism to be repeated as often as the Holy Supper; one should be baptized every Sabbath, or at least

every month. The same might be said of any baptism which is supposed to convey some special and instantaneous grace at the time of its being administered. If baptism is a means of sacramental grace, a means of regeneration or of edification reserved to the believer, it should be often repeated. God would certainly not have placed within our reach such a valuable means of edification, of dying to the world and being buried with Christ, and yet forbidden us to use it more than once. But if baptism is the signature and seal of a covenant, like circumcision, then it is easily understood why the covenant need not be signed and sealed over again after it has once been done.

§ 143. **In the Case of a doubtful Baptism, the Conscience of the Individual should decide whether he be re-baptized or not.**—As baptism must be granted but once, a second baptism annihilates the first. By causing himself to be re-baptized, one professes that he does not believe he had really received the token of the covenant before, and that he was not bound to God by any formal pledge. This is the subjective point of view, which in very many cases must decide concerning the propriety of re-baptizing such or such persons whose baptism may be considered doubtful. This is especially the case in conversions from Romanism.

The Reformers have acknowledged the baptism of Rome as valid, while most of the American Presbyterians re-baptize the convert from Romanism before admitting him to their churches. From the objective point of view, there is cause to re-baptize, for the baptism of Rome not only differs from that of the Gospel by many superstitious additions, but is also celebrated in an unknown tongue. It is not a baptism at all in accordance with Scriptural rules; it is to say the least doubtful. But if baptism is considered from the subjective point of view, which forms the essential object of the ordinance, it becomes impracticable to lay down a general rule. In spite of many additions, the external form having been followed, with an honest intention of initiating into Christianity and consecrating to the God of the Gospel, it only remains to ascertain whether the receiver of that baptism considers himself pledged by it, and whether his conscience thus possesses the essential result of baptism. It must be ascertained also whether the religious community with which he associates considers his baptism valid and binding. It is in reference to this subjective conviction of both the individual and the community that it should be decided whether to re-baptize him or not. When circumcision had been administered to the people of Israel in times of darkness, ignorance, and superstition, they were

not circumcised again when there came a season of religious revival and renewal of faithfulness to the covenant, because every Israelite felt conscientiously bound to the covenant by the circumcision received from his parents. The Reformers received no other baptism than that of Rome, and it was sufficient to them, because they felt bound for all their lifetime by that ceremony of consecration, however imperfect it had been. And, still later, Evangelical Protestants have felt bound and pledged to the covenant by a baptism which they received when children, and which is too often conferred without all the solemnity, the conviction, and the light desirable, but yet is performed with an honest and sincere intention of initiating into Christianity. Indeed, the most imperfect Protestant baptism will still come up to the mark supposed to have been exacted in that of the eunuch, for no nominal Christian will hesitate to repeat such a simple profession of faith as "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (Acts viii. 37.)

§ 144. **When the Unconverted make a Sincere Profession their Children ought to be baptized.**

— But should the children of the unconverted be baptized, or only those of believers? Should god-fathers and godmothers be allowed? These questions have troubled the conscience of several minis-

ters, and helped to bring them over to the Baptist view. However, when the nature of baptism is well understood, the answer is not difficult. We say, yes, the children of the unconverted must be baptized if their parents appear sincere in their profession of Christianity. We have no right to exact from them more than Philip did from the eunuch. "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." The question to us is not whether the parents are regenerated or not, which God alone knows. The question is: Do they acknowledge the claims of God upon themselves and their families? Notwithstanding their unconverted state, do they admit the truth in reference to sin and its remission through the blood of Christ? Do they express an external adherence to the Gospel, the sincerity of which cannot be doubted? If they only do this, it is enough. The Apostles baptized heathen and Jews, who gave no evidence of having reached a higher spiritual degree than most of our nominal Protestants. But the forms generally used, even the liturgy of established churches, demand, before baptism can take place, a certain profession on the part of the parent, and some pledge that the child will receive a Christian education. The moment the parent consents and promises, the minister is shielded from responsibility, and the administration of the ordinance will supply him with an excellent opportunity to preach

the Gospel under peculiarly favorable circumstances, when he may expect to secure the ear even of indifferent parents.

§ 145. **The Custom of having Godfathers and Godmothers is not opposed to the Gospel, and, if well managed, may offer great advantages; but the Rite of Confirmation impairs the Value of Infant Baptism.** — The custom of having godfathers and godmothers is neither mentioned nor even alluded to in Scripture, unless Paul acted as godfather in circumcising Timothy; nor of course is it forbidden. And yet learned disquisitions have been written to show that the practice of sponsors must be wrong, because there is no trace of them in Scripture. But there is no Apostolical precedent for churchwardens, the wedding ceremony, white cravats, black gowns, pulpits, organs, spires, and bells; but these things, not being forbidden nor contrary to Scripture, are left as a matter of Christian liberty, and so should also sponsors be. The practice has been abused; but there is nothing to prevent its being brought back to its original purity. The fact is, that if a little child has lost his parents previous to being baptized, it becomes indispensable that he should be brought to the ordinance by the person who ranks nearest to him, and assumes towards him the place of a parent. This person is

to all intent and purpose a genuine sponsor, and has been very properly called a godfather or a godmother. To God he pledges himself to stand in the stead of father or mother to the forlorn child. He will consider the latter as one of his household, place upon him the seal of the covenant, and engage that he shall serve the Lord and be brought up in his fear. And not only death, but absence, sickness, and other causes frequently incapacitate the parent from pledging his child to God in baptism. Thus, in spite of all prejudices, sponsors become an unavoidable but also blessed fact, although they may not assume the name. It is very natural, however, that a parent should not trust to chance the choice of a sponsor, and should prefer, while present and alive, to select him, and thus guard against all contingency. If, at the baptism of the child, some trusty friend or relative will voluntarily participate in that bond of covenant with the Lord, and pledge himself, in case of the parents being incapacitated, to see that the child is brought up under the discipline of the Gospel, this is a decided religious advantage to the child, an important guaranty for the family, the pastor, and the Church. We must be permitted to state here a fact within our personal experience, which will illustrate the advantage that may be derived from this custom when properly managed.

A Protestant father, married to a Roman Catholic, urged us to baptize his child. He was a very honest man, but one whose unbelief and scepticism were the more conspicuous because he occupied a high social position. We positively declined, and told him that such baptism would be hypocrisy. The father, however, felt very reluctant to call the priest, and again insisted. We then proposed to him that he should select amongst his relatives as godfather a person whose Evangelical faith was known to us, and that he should let the godfather present the child. We exacted, moreover, on the part of the parents, a solemn pledge that they would cause the child to be brought up in the faith of his godfather, and that they should grant the latter full right and power to see to this. The condition was accepted. At the baptism, the fundamental truths of the Gospel were clearly stated, the pledge of the covenant given by the godfather, while a solemn yes of assent and confirmation was uttered by the father and the mother in presence of witnesses. Who will dare to assert that a baptism performed under such circumstances, with the resort to a pious godfather, was not an immense privilege conferred upon the child, a religious advantage upon which his future career may essentially depend ?

The rite of confirmation adopted by several Protestant churches has no Scriptural ground. Some

Continental Presbyterian churches practise it under the inoffensive name of "ratification of the vow of baptism." Nor can we say that it is beneficial, or even harmless. It favors the spread of Baptist notions, by creating a vague impression in the minds of the people that infant baptism is not quite sufficient as a pledge or token of covenant, and that its validity must be propped up afterwards for adults by a special ceremony. Confirmation impairs the value of infant baptism, and contains the so-called "believer's baptism" in germ.

But we have carried these details on the relation of baptism to the religious life of the family far enough. We have only, before closing our investigations, to offer some remarks on the manner in which baptism is related to church discipline.

CHAPTER XV.

BAPTISM AND ECCLESIASTICAL DISCIPLINE.

§ 146. **Slight Differences among Pedobaptists in Regard to the Relation of Baptism to Admission to the Church.**—There is a difference of opinion amongst Pedobaptists as to the right of admission into the Church which baptism confers. Some look upon children as officially introduced into the Church by their baptism, and when become adults let them claim the communion and church privileges as a second degree of initiation only, and not as a formal admission into the body. Others, not considering baptism as equivalent to an admission into the Church, but only as a preliminary requisite, oblige those previously baptized to apply for admission, and receive them into membership according to certain rules of discipline. We have already expressed our view that the practice of the latter is more in accordance with Scripture, which nowhere considers baptism as an admission into the Church. This difference, how-

ever, is of small importance, and experience shows that churches following the one or the other basis of admission may be very pure and very Evangelical. Thus the Presbyterian and the Congregationalist churches, which represent the two opinions, are both generally distinguished for a fulness of Christian life and activity.

§ 147. **Baptist Multitudinism is more dangerous to Piety than any other.**—Several of our brethren in France and Switzerland have taken a great aversion to the multitudinous baptism which they see practised around them in the established churches, apparently without any beneficial result, and they feel therefore secretly drawn towards Baptist principles. We understand their aversion, and we share in it. Evidently, here is an abuse which calls for correction, for it is not the intention of the Lord that baptism should degenerate into an empty form. But we are equally convinced that the remedy for the abuse does not lie in Anabaptism, and that to adopt it would be going from bad to worse. Anabaptism, by undermining the religious obligations of the Christian family, will never edify the kingdom of Christ more successfully than Pedobaptism. It may accomplish a beneficial work on missionary ground, for Baptist Christianity is after all Christianity, which under its most unfavorable

aspect must bring remission of sins to the heathen. But whenever it displaces Evangelical Pedobaptism, instead of Heathenism or Romanism, it will prove a loss and not a benefit to the cause of Christ. And yet, unfortunately, its great aim is to destroy and supplant the other Evangelical churches, the members of which are all placed under the ban of Baptist discipline. This sectarian exclusivism has always been a characteristic of most forms of error, and the common feature of all narrow-minded sects, from the Manichæans to the Mormons, the Irvingites, the Darbyites, &c., &c. While aiming at greater purity, Anabaptism has after all resulted in a multitudinism of the worst kind. Families inherit Baptist ideas, but not piety. Wherever this principle has full sway over a community, the indiscriminate baptism of all adults at a certain age, converted or not, has become the fashion. The multitudinous baptism of supposed believers has taken the place of infant baptism. In Alsace, Germany, and Switzerland, numerous Baptist churches have perpetuated themselves as a family inheritance, after the complete extinction of all religious life, and in our days it has become necessary to send missionaries to preach the rudiments of the Gospel to these formalists, who have become more dead spiritually than the established churches, which they traditionally considered as the world, while they

still imagined themselves to be the only true baptized believers.

Moreover, sectarian enthusiasm and zeal for immersion render one rather unscrupulous in regard to admissions. A Baptist agent, in the pay of a Baptist society, understands very well that the value of his services is measured by the number of immersions performed in the year. No concern is manifested, no inquiries made as to where he enlists his candidates, whether from the world or from Evangelical churches. The essential question is, how many people he has immersed, and those he has immersed he is held to have also converted. Hence, the notorious fact that the piety of a great proportion of these new church-members never goes beyond their immersion. They think themselves sufficiently Christianized by the great ceremony they have undergone, which is to them the culminating point of all religion. Thus, the statistical numbers of Baptist churches in the United States are swollen by nearly a million of black slaves, who lie in the most profound ignorance, and who have caused themselves to be immersed from the natural impulse of their sensual nature, and because of the fascination that there is in a great exciting ceremony, which attraction they do not find in the other Protestant denominations. Here there is a multitudinism more repulsive than that which prevails in

established churches, and perhaps the very worst in existence. The Gospel can be preached with some success to an unconverted Protestant baptized in infancy; but to preach the Gospel to a man immersed, but unregenerated, is lost labor; his immersion is to him a passport to heaven. You will never be able to persuade him that he still needs a change of heart. He has been publicly acknowledged as a believer, and has been with great display buried into the death of Christ. He belongs to the only faithful church, ranks above the most pious non-immersed Christians, and henceforth his self-righteousness is beyond that of Pharisees. He is a being inaccessible to the Gospel.

§ 148. **Baptists aim at a Medium between Fanaticism and Incredulity.** — Our Baptist friends must not conceal from themselves the fact that they extend one hand to the most extravagant sects, and the other to the impiety of the age, thus finding themselves the centre of a fearful multitudinism. It is unnecessary here to pass in review all the infamous sects which, from the German Anabaptists to the American Mormons, have constituted themselves on the Baptist principle. Even the Druses, that nation of brigands and assassins, conform to Baptist practice under the legal sanction of the government; for, the Turkish law exempting Christians

from military service, and acknowledging as Christians only such as are baptized, the Druses as soon as they become adults are baptized by a Christian priest on profession of faith. Here is a bad multitudinism on Baptist principle, and acknowledged by law. Our Evangelical Baptists originated as a moderate party in the midst of a most repulsive Anabaptist development, which they have neither begun nor ended. On the other hand, our Baptist friends never argue against the baptism of infants — never attempt to ridicule it and show its inefficacy — without having on their side, the applause of all modern infidelity. Socinus and Servetus were already theirs, and the latter brings forward the authority of the Sibyls and of Hermes Trismegistus to show that the heathen themselves, long before the Baptists, conferred upon adults alone their sacred ablutions, and that Christians ought not to be less rational than heathen. All modern unbelievers ridicule infant baptism. Jesuits themselves cannot help openly applauding the Baptist doctrine, and rejoicing at its progress, as being an element of rationalism well calculated to enervate Protestantism.

§ 149. **The Remedy for Multitudinism does not lie in Baptist Antinomianism, but in the Preaching of the Gospel.** — Evangelical Christians

are very much mistaken when they think they see in Anabaptism the panacea for the spiritual evils arising from multitudinous baptism. The true remedy lies in the preaching of the Gospel, in the teaching of truth, and in faithfulness. It is by such means that Christians must gradually be led to understand the solemnity and the obligations of infant baptism. Often in the history of the people of God did circumcision degenerate into a mere form. Once there were but seven thousand faithful amongst those multitudes who had received the seal of the covenant. This multitudinous circumcision must have been very revolting to the religious feelings of pious men who were true to the covenant. Just as now-a-days we have to preach to nominal Christians that their baptism does not save them, did these men also teach the unfaithful multitudes that their circumcision would not avail with God, unless their hearts were also circumcised. But for all this, no prophet laid a sacrilegious hand upon the ordinance of God, none inveighed against the circumcision of infants and the covenanting of households, none sought a violent remedy for the unfaithfulness of the multitudes by administering the rite according to the dictates of human wisdom. But they approached their covenanted co-religionists by telling them, "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart!" Let us preach after the same fashion to

the unconverted masses, telling them that their baptism will not save them as long as their hearts are unbaptized with the baptism of the Holy Ghost; but let us resist the rationalistic impulse that would lead us to snatch from the family the pledge of the covenant which God has mercifully allowed them, and by which the most degenerate Christian nations of the day are after all infinitely superior to the heathen. In the most hopeless times of national unfaithfulness the prophets respected infant circumcision; let us also, while groaning over the degeneracy of many churches, beware of increasing the evils of apostasy by wantonly suppressing infant baptism.

Pedobaptism has its abuses; but there is no ceremony, no religious practice, which has not. It will never be safe to conclude from the abuse of a privilege against its very existence; otherwise the Church and Christianity itself would ultimately have to be suppressed. There is some cowardice, as well as superficiality, in being so utterly dispirited before abuses as to want to destroy everything, in order to rebuild anew with dangerous novelties. It is more according to the Gospel to prune, correct, and redress, while retaining the old foundations. Our Reformers would never have succeeded in reaching the bright goal of their arduous undertaking, had they not proceeded with their reforms in a conser-

vative spirit. To state the whole truth, there is at the bottom of the Baptist tendency Antinomianism and a certain contempt for the Old Testament which discloses ignorance and superficiality. The New Testament, however, is incomplete and uncertain without its basis, which is the Old. All the strong declarations of the Gospel concerning the binding authority of Scripture refer exclusively to the Old Testament, which was then the only Scripture. The Lord has ordained that we should resort to the latter for our information on the sign of the covenant, its nature and its spiritual sense; and he has condemned to serious error, to schism and sectarian spirit, him who despises the old covenant, and wishes to isolate himself from it to give free scope to his fancy and personal sense. He who neglects the Old Testament lays aside what is emphatically the Scripture to which our Master has referred us. And no one can throw himself with impunity into such a practical Antinomianism.

§ 150. **Anabaptism has a regular, certain, and perfectly logical Development, which leads unfailingly to the most Sectarian Bigotry.** — But we have not yet spoken of the Baptist discipline, which is a point of high importance in our investigation, as the fruit, the net result of the system we oppose. Here, then, is set before us, from un-

deniable facts, the phenomenon of the progress and development of Anabaptism. In its early beginnings, it is innocent and peaceful as a lamb; this is the case at present in France and Switzerland, except perhaps where Baptist agents are sustained by foreign societies. When it has taken sufficient root as a latent principle, it organizes itself into an ecclesiastical body, and begins immediately to become intolerant, but with moderation, as long as it is weak. This is the case in England, where, being as yet but a small minority, it is half tolerant, half exclusive. But when Anabaptism has obtained a full success, when it is strong and independent, when it has attained all its free development, then it becomes the most exclusive of all the sects. Its disciples glory in the name of Strict Baptists, and consider themselves as the only true Baptists. Such is the case in the United States and the neighboring British Colonies. It is there that we must study the discipline and constitution of Anabaptism in all their purity; for everywhere else it exists but in germ, or is still in the way of progress and development, without having reached its maturity.

American Baptists are all but unanimous in refusing to participate in the Lord's Supper with a brother who has not been immersed, and moreover immersed after faith. Still more will they refuse to admit into the Church any member except those

immersed. The most questionable convert of yesterday, if only immersed, is welcome to all church privileges; but the most faithful Christian, even after a life of marked devotedness to the cause of Christ, will be sternly denied even the privilege of sitting at the Lord's table, and ranked outside in a class with the heathen, because he has failed to discover immersion in the Gospel. This close communionism once caused a large-hearted Baptist, Robert Hall, to deny that a supper laid exclusively for immersionists could be the Lord's table. But they justify their exclusivism and their bigotry by a course of reasoning which is perfectly logical. They say: "Pedobaptist churches are agreed to receive as members, and to admit to the communion, only such as are baptized. We do precisely the same thing, neither more nor less. To us, there is no genuine baptism but that of the believer, and moreover that given by immersion. Adults who have received infant baptism, or have been baptized after faith but by sprinkling, are not in our view baptized at all; their baptism is no baptism. We should be unfaithful to our principles if we acknowledged their baptism as valid; we owe it to our conscience and to the truth to exclude them from church-membership, and even from the communion, as being unbaptized." This reasoning is as clear, as logical, and as unanswerable as that of

the strict slaveholder: "You do not admit to your table and to citizenship your cattle, but only beings with a human skin. We do precisely the same thing. For it is our settled principle that no man is a man unless he has a white skin. To us your man with a black skin is cattle. We should go against all truth, conscience, and principle were we to admit him to our table and to the privileges of citizenship." Such is the power of this logic, that neither Baptists nor slaveholders are ever convinced by arguments; but the latter are not fruitless if they only serve to circumscribe the area of slavery and Anabaptism.

§ 151. **The Christian Heart in vain attempts a Compromise with Baptist Discipline and Logic.**

—The premises once granted, it is hopeless to contend against such logical reasoning, and moderate Baptists have no solid ground on which to stand; and, therefore, it is morally certain that either themselves or their successors will always eventually become strict Baptists. Rigor, bigotry, and sectarianism are the unavoidable result of consistent Baptist principles. Moderate Baptists are in a false position; they are in a state of transition, and they endeavor in vain to arrest and steady themselves upon the slippery declivity. The true Baptists denounce them as lax, pusillanimous, and unfaithful

to the truth, and exert upon them a constant pressure, to which, after a while, the greater number succumb. A few Baptists, painfully aware of the strong contrast existing between their principles and the communion of saints, and unwilling to break the best bonds of fraternal union, have thought to separate admission to the Lord's table from admission to the Church; to be strict for the last, and lax for the first, and thus give to bigotry and fraternity each its share. But this distinction is without any foundation in the Gospel; for he who is a sufficiently good Christian to participate in the highest privilege, the Lord's Supper, is a sufficiently good Christian to be also a church-member. The Apostles never knew these two distinct admissions; they are a recent fiction, the only value of which is to show to what a degree the innermost Christian feeling unconsciously protests against the Baptist practice.

That same love of Christ has led several of the most pious Baptists to protest involuntarily against their doctrine, by a ceremony of consecration of infants, destined to take the place of baptism. That is to say, they have first taken away from the family the ordinance of Jesus Christ; then they have felt uneasy at having lowered the children of the promise to the level of those of heathenism; then, in order not to contradict themselves, they invent a new

ceremony, which they put in the place of baptism ; and, finally, they persuade themselves that they are very evangelical, when in reality they walk in the footsteps of Romanism by creating ceremonial novelties, and substituting them for the ordinances of the Gospel.

§ 152. **Baptist Zealotry proceeds from an exaggerated and false Importance attributed to Baptism.** — A ceremony which Jesus Christ never consented to practise himself, which the Apostle of the Gentiles generally abandoned to his subordinates, and which the Apostle of the circumcision calls a mere putting away of the filth of the flesh, should evidently not obtain the exaggerated importance which Baptists have arbitrarily given to it. Which Baptist pastor or agent could candidly and cordially say, like Paul, “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel”? Which of them would spend eighteen months in a city like Corinth, founding a church, effecting numerous conversions, and yet baptizing but three families? Which of them could thank God that he baptized none other? Which of them could attach so little importance to a rite requiring great preparations, as not to be able to remember whether or not he buried with Christ this or that brother? Which of them could say, “I baptized none of you but two,

and I baptized also a third, the household of Stephanus ; besides, I know not whether I baptized any other" ? Which of them would justify such carelessness and indifference to the exalted ordinance, by stating that baptism is of little consequence, that it is no object for a missionary of Christ, " For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel" ? (1 Cor. i. 14-17.) With what intense disgust would the Apostle Paul contemplate all that Baptist fanaticism, that zeal of proselytism, which impels them to rend asunder other churches, in order to build upon another man's foundation ! With what burning indignation would Peter see the washing of Moses and John, against the undue importance of which he had warned all ages, set up by a society of Christians as an idol, at the altar of which the unity of the Church and the communion of saints are daily sacrificed ! It would be difficult to imagine a sadder position for a Christian than that of a missionary agent, salaried by a Baptist society, and obliged to deserve the favor of his patrons by reports showing how many immersions have been performed during the year, and endeavoring by clever insinuations to make recruits for the great ceremony amongst the weak minds of other Evangelical churches.

§ 153. **Anabaptism is, by its exclusive Arro-**

gance, the petty Rival of Popery. — Strict Baptists have exalted their peculiar doctrine to the rank of fundamental truths. They have excommunicated all Evangelical Christians but themselves. They will neither let them participate in the communion in their own churches, nor go and take it with them in theirs. Luther, Calvin, Wesley, and all brethren from Pedobaptist churches, are excommunicated; there is not one of them worthy to sit with Baptists at the table of the Lord, for they are all indiscriminately disobedient and unfaithful Christians, refusing to submit to the positive command of God to let themselves be immersed. Could the host of martyrs, who, from the days of the Cæsars to the dragoonades of the Huguenots, have sealed with blood their witness for Christ, rise from their tombs and present themselves at the Baptist communion-table, they would be told, “Stand aside, you unfaithful and unworthy disciples! the blood of Christ is for us, and not for you!” They would hear language addressed to them that would grate on their ears very much like “God, I thank thee that I am not as other men.” And such is the rigor of this discipline, that even a Baptist is liable to excommunication for taking the Lord’s Supper with his Pedobaptist brethren.

Thus have the strict Baptists, the only true ones, reached the maturity of their principles by virtually

seceding from Protestantism to return to the platform of Popery. For what are the other Protestant churches, the Lutheran, the Presbyterian, the Methodist, the Congregationalist, etc., but churches entirely made up of excommunicated people, from the pastor to the last member? Is an assembly of the excommunicated a church? Can a body of excommunicated clergymen form an evangelical ministry? In a word, can a society of people, not one of whom is worthy to be received as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ, not one of whom is entitled to the Christian sacrament, compose an Evangelical church? Evidently not. Therefore the Baptist Church is absolutely the sole Christian church in the world. Virtually there is no other church, no other evangelical clergy. Is not this pure Romanism? It may seem incredible that the Baptists should really have inherited the arrogance of Rome, and have set up rival claims with the Pope. It will be thought that, if our conclusions are strictly logical, Baptists at least do not make them. But let our friends be undeceived. Of course there are, thanks to God, inconsistent Baptists, as there are inconsistent Romanists, whose hearts get the better of rigid sectarianism. But the Romish platform is openly advocated by the leaders of the Baptist denomination. For instance, on the 12th of June, 1858, the Tennessee Baptist Association, a leading

one in the United States, voted to refuse all pulpit exchanges with Pedobaptist ministers as unbaptized persons. And in the same year a Baptist quarterly, the *Christian Review*, said to be the highest authority in the denomination, in a leading article, unchurched all Pedobaptist churches, declaring that true Baptists "should never admit Pedobaptist societies to be churches."

Daniel Webster, when remonstrating with the arrogance of Austria, reminded her that she was but a speck on the map of the world, and that her overbearing conceit was not in keeping with her real importance. Need our Baptist brethren be reminded that they also are but a speck on the map of eighteen centuries of Christianity, and that their exclusive and arrogant claims more than border on ridicule?

§ 154. **The present Baptist Doctrine and Practice date back but two Centuries, and have been fomented by the Jesuits.** — But who are those who thus assume to be alone the true Church? They are but of yesterday. For fifteen hundred years Christendom ignored their existence and their claims; indeed, we have already shown that Tertullian and other Fathers scarcely held a single principle in regard to baptism in common with our modern Baptists. The Waldenses, those apostolic

witnesses, have always practised infant baptism, as is shown from their oldest documents. The attempt has been made to trace the existence of Baptist principles among some of the ephemeral sects of the Middle Ages, but unsuccessfully. For they either rejected baptism altogether, and along with it all sacraments, even marriage, or else if they re-baptized people they meant only to protest against Romish baptism, just as American Presbyterians re-baptize Romanists. Anabaptism originated in Germany after the Reformation, and with the avowed purpose of supplanting it. In this it fails, but succeeds effectually in obstructing and stopping the work begun by Luther, and which would otherwise have spread all over the world. When triumphant, Anabaptism plunders, murders, sanctions polygamy, and revels in debauchery, until exterminated in a crusade undertaken in the name of public morality. To the timely appearance of the Baptist principle, three hundred years ago, does the Romish Church owe its present existence. Baptists may boast of having checked the progress of the Reformation and consolidated the See of the Pope by throwing back into his conservative arms an indignant and affrighted world. After a while, a Catholic priest, Menno, resuscitates Anabaptism under a more moderate form, but connects with it heresies upon which modern Baptists are silent. He ordains, amongst

other things, the frequent practice of the washing of the feet as an important sacrament of the Church. His followers quarrelled together, and divided into several little sects, bearing different names, and all stained with gross errors. Most of them have sunk into complete infidelity while retaining their forms, and thus present a Baptist multitudinism.

It is not there that we must look for the parentage of our present Baptists ; they are far more modern, and sprang up in England about two centuries ago. But, while they repudiate the Anabaptists of Germany, they are scarcely conscious of their own origin, which we must be permitted to mention here. Under Cromwell, the Non-conformists, being triumphant over both the Romanists and the Episcopalians, it was seen that the only way to weaken the Evangelical churches was to divide them, and that this must be done at any price. Baptist principles were beginning to peer out here and there, imported from Holland, but very vague, unsectarian, and unorganized. A bishop of great celebrity, J. Taylor, saw with his friends that it was only by a question of doctrine and conscience that these stern Puritans, so united together in evangelical bonds, could be divided. It was evident that Anabaptism, which had had the power to wreck in part the Lutheran reformation, was the best and strongest expedient. Bishop Taylor accordingly consecrated his leisure

and science in preparing a work, since famous, advocating Baptist principles. He threw it into the midst of the evangelical churches, and the bomb burst with perfect success. It was by far the most powerful and convincing work which had ever appeared in behalf of Anabaptism. The discussion was entered into by the Non-conformists, and Baptist bigotry spread its venom amongst them. The Jesuits took heart again, and gave all their support to the Baptist opinions, asserting that the Bible was Baptist, and that only by the authority of the Church could infant baptism be justified. The Baptist preacher who was then the most zealous, and obtained immense success, was Captain Everard, a Jesuit in disguise, who later threw off his Baptist mask. A Jesuit father on his travels having been arrested and searched, his trunk was found full of Baptist pamphlets. In the course of time, the artifice of Bishop Taylor met with complete success; the Puritans were divided, and succumbed. When the mischief was done, and the Episcopalians had regained their power, the Bishop publicly avowed himself the author of the popular Baptist work, and felt it his duty himself to publish a refutation. But his Baptist book was so plausible, so well written, and had met with such success, that the celebrated Doctor Hammond thought it necessary, to the great mortification of the Bishop,

to write also a learned answer. We are indebted for these interesting details to an Episcopal source, Wall (II. 15-17).

§ 155. **Why the Baptist Schism is the most suitable Expedient for weakening Evangelical Churches.**—This worthy Bishop Taylor showed great tact, and a deep knowledge of human nature, in understanding that one of the best artifices for dividing Evangelical churches is to put forward Baptist views. Experience, from the days of Luther, shows that there is no surer, no more efficacious process for creating schisms, acrimony, exclusivism, and anathemas in the midst of a religious revival, or in the bosom of Evangelical churches enjoying calm and peace, than the arrival of a Baptist agent, who comes to preach his Anabaptism as if it were a new Gospel. The Baptist schism, moreover, has this element of permanency above all others, that it assumes a very concrete and material shape, perpetuating itself by means of an external ceremony,—immersion. Doctrines and abstract notions are changeable, and may pass away, but ceremonies remain, and are most tenacious. Indeed, both Romanism and Anabaptism owe the greater part of their vitality to the ceremonial element, which takes a strong hold of weak human nature. The Bishop and the Jesuits have, therefore, admirably suc-

ceeded, and their work, which is that of the great enemy, is perpetuated up to this day. Modern Anabaptism owes to them, in great part, its existence, and, transferred to the fertile soil of America, it has won astonishing success. But let it no longer be asserted that this ceremonial delusion is the work of God; we know whence it comes, and how the enemies of the Gospel have promoted it as an instrument to reach their unhallowed ends.

We cannot without regret and sadness see respectable and conscientious brethren thus let "Satan get an advantage of them, though they should not be ignorant of his devices," and through their Baptist zealotry allow themselves very honestly and unknowingly to become the tools and agents of the Jesuits. This painful feeling is increased by the conviction that it is almost hopeless to expect from them a return to wiser counsels. The experience of the Church, in all ages, teaches that when a mind, however honest and sincere, has once become entangled in the meshes of some sectarian doctrine, it scarcely ever extricates itself. To speak only of our own times, it is a notorious fact that neither Mormons, nor Shakers, nor Millerites, nor Perfectionists, nor Darbyites, nor Baptists, nor Irvingites, nor Swedenborgians, etc., are ever brought back from their errors by any book written for them, nor by any course of argument, nor by any declarations

of the Word of God, nor by the sight of the worst consequences resulting from their system. They are proof against any change of conviction, and die deploring that the world would not appreciate their peculiar doctrine, which to them is emphatically the truth and the Gospel. All that should be attempted when a conflagration rages, and cannot be put out, is to circumscribe the flames, to prevent the destroying element from spreading to exposed materials, and to make the latter secure and fire-proof. In proportion as this can be accomplished will the scourge be checked, and gradually die out for want of materials to consume. It is, therefore, the duty of all Pedobaptist ministers to be thoroughly posted up on the leading points of the Baptist controversy, and to impart to the people under their charge instructions of a clear and definite character, sufficient to make them proof against the proselytizing attempts of their Baptist brethren, who enjoy the superior advantage of having made the question a specialty. Unfortunately this duty has been too much neglected. Ministers have entertained too vague ideas on the subject, or have laid it altogether aside with contempt, as unworthy of much attention. Hence the progress of Baptists, hence these frequent and discouraging desertions of pious church-members, who, unable to defend the cause of infant baptism, con-

scientifically surrender their bodies, and with their bodies also their souls, to immersionists. Were it not for this culpable neglect and this defenceless condition, Baptists would make but few or no recruits, and the day they cease to live by piracy upon Evangelical churches, they will rapidly dwindle away. That the neglect has been great, and that in consequence there is an alarming amount of latent Baptist principle among some Pedobaptist churches, is a fact that cannot be denied, and which is even susceptible of statistical proof. Thus, while the Episcopal Church in the United States has one infant baptism in the year to every four communicants, the Methodist Church has but one baptism to twenty-one communicants. We have not Presbyterian returns of baptisms, but if Congregationalism must be judged from its last statistical returns, it is in a fair way of becoming a nursery for Baptists. These returns show in Maine, for the whole year, but one infant baptism for each forty-five church-members ; in Illinois, one to fifty-eight ; and in Massachusetts, only one to sixty-two ! These numbers, if reliable, reveal a most deplorable state of things, which calls for immediate and most earnest attention on the part of ecclesiastical bodies.

§ 156. **The Baptist Babel, with its Schisms of Schisms, should serve as a Warning to Evan-**

getical Christians.—Fortunately sectarianism and fanaticism carry with them their own chastisement. Thus Anabaptism, which promised to re-establish the primitive Church, to be a panacea for the scourge of multitudinism, and to baptize all Christians into one body, is after all nothing but a house divided against itself. Never has any other religious community, founded upon any principle whatever, undergone such internal schisms. Among them are divisions without end, and schisms of schisms. In Holland, their original cradle, where they once attained great numbers and corresponding influence, they have divided among themselves, until, like impalpable dust, they are fast disappearing and mingling with other religious elements; a fate which probably awaits English and American Baptists, when, after another century, they will have reached the present mature age of their Dutch brethren. Among the weak remnants that still survive, the following may be noticed:—1st. The original Mennonites. 2d. The Refined, or Old Flemings. 3d. The Gross or Fatherlanders. 4th. The Apostoolers. 5th. The Sonnites, whose symbol is the sun. 6th. The Galenists. 7th. The Lammists. 8th. Baptist Remonstrants. 9th. Baptist Collegiants. 10th. Baptist Unitarians. 11th. Baptist Arminians. 12th. Baptist Socinians. 13th. The Christosacrums, etc. The list, although incomplete,

is instructive, and carries a lesson with it. A summary review of the Baptist schisms of another single country, the United States, will be no less edifying. We have, — 1st. The Regular Baptists of the South, who acknowledge slavery as a Biblical institution. 2d. The Regular Baptists of the North, who excommunicate those of the South. 3d. The Anti-mission Baptists, who are opposed to missions. 4th. The Freewill Baptists, who are Arminians. 5th. The Open-communion Baptists, who still keep up a lingering existence, but are on the eve of disappearing. 6th. The Six-principle Baptists (Heb. vi. 13), who practise the laying on of hands. 7th. The Sabatarian Baptists, who keep Saturday, and work on Sunday. 8th. The Seventh-day Baptists, originally German, who perform three immersions, dress as monks, and exalt celibacy. 9th. The Tunkers, — three immersions, washing of feet and long beards. 10th. The Particular Baptists, who have particular ideas on Atonement. 11th. The Original Mennonites, who have bishops. 12th. The Reformed Mennonites, whose principle is non-resistance. 13th. The Hooker Mennonites, who make it a case of conscience not to wear buttons to their coats, and who protest by their hooks against all the other Baptists as conforming to the world. These spiritual Baptists have no less than five thousand church-members, and over a hundred clergymen, all with hooks

and no buttons. 14th. The Quaker Baptists, who have borrowed from the Quakers all their principles, except the suppression of baptism. 15th. The Baptists calling themselves the Church of God, who excommunicate all who do not practise total abstinence from wine. 16th. The Campbellites, or Disciples of Christ. They believe that regeneration is effected by baptism. Faith alone cannot save, but immersion by its efficacy washes away sins. They do not believe in the Trinity. Their schism has had only thirty years of existence, yet they already reckon about four hundred thousand members, over two thousand churches, and as many clergymen. They are the Baptists of the future, and threaten to swallow up all the other Baptist sects by their unparalleled success. 17th. The Rogerenes, who observe the seventh day and have spiritual marriages. 18th. The Mormons, the last Baptist novelty, — immersion, prophets, polygamy, incest, etc. Elder Orson Hyde and Prophet Rigdon, who were once shining lights in the Baptist Church, state that all consistent Baptists are bound to become Mormons, as they did. We might still mention the Ironside Baptists, the Baptist Adventists, the Immersionist Plymouth Brethren, the Winebrennarians of Pennsylvania, and other minor Baptist sects, which we pass in silence. This list is sufficient; it possesses the eloquence of facts. It disposes very

summarily of the arrogant claims of Baptists. Each of the sects we have just enumerated has its own body and its separate existence. Nearly all excommunicate and anathematize each other. They are but of yesterday, and yet, with their common exorbitant claim of being each the only true Church, they are split up into schisms of schisms.

§ 157. **The Heaven of Baptists is a Sad Mansion.** — Arrived at the close of our investigation, let us cast a glance beyond the veil, and depict to ourselves what the heaven of Baptists must be. A heaven of the excommunicated! All the Christians of the first fifteen centuries of the Church — nearly all, without an exception — excommunicated on earth and yet members of heaven! All the Evangelical Christians, since the Reformation, with the exception of the insignificant fraction of scarcely one thousandth, also excommunicated! The true Church lost for sixteen centuries and found again by the Baptists! And heaven peopled with unworthy Christians, rebel apostates! What uneasiness, what loathing, will seize upon the strict Baptist, the only true one, when he shall draw near to the gate of heaven! How can he pass through it without renouncing his favorite creed! Who people heaven? Precisely those whom he has excommunicated here below; those whom he has constantly

repelled, those with whom he has ever declined to form one body, nay, even those with whom he would not deign to break the bread of salvation! Truly, to live henceforth with the excommunicated, to make one body with them, to find one's self absorbed in their overwhelming numbers, is a sad fate! From the Baptist point of view, heaven is an apostasy, a kingdom of God overturned, a place where the faithful could find neither peace nor happiness.

§ 158. **The Touchstone offered by Jesus Christ to simple Christians.** — We close by a last argument, more simple, but also more powerful, than all others, — a unique argument, by which many pious and excellent brethren have reached the same conclusions as ourselves, probably with less light, but with more rapidity and equal certainty. They have chosen to abide by the sublime precept of Jesus Christ, “You shall know the tree by his fruit.” They have tasted of the bitter fruit of Anabaptism, and this has sufficed them. They have experienced, or at least witnessed, its narrow-mindedness, its acerbity, its spirit of division, its bitter zeal of proselytism, its fanaticism, its extravagances, its formalism, and its Pharisaical self-righteousness. At this sad spectacle they have stood aghast, and several of them, already carried away towards Baptist views, have halted, turned back, and attached themselves anew, as it

were by Christian instinct, to the ancient doctrine of Evangelical churches. They have said within themselves, as their Master taught them, that, the fruits being corrupt, the tree also was certainly corrupt; that the Baptist principle, however specious it seemed to them at first, absolutely could not be the truth. Controversy and theological researches have been superfluous to them; they have preferred to give their time, their attention, and their heart to what edifies. But the conclusion on baptism which they have reached is entirely safe and perfectly solid. It has first the approbation of Jesus Christ, then that of experience and of that practical common sense which the Gospel does not disdain. This conviction suffices for many Christians; it might have sufficed for us, but it does not satisfy all minds, and therefore we have written this work.

To Him who baptized not with water, but with the Holy Ghost, — to Jesus, the Mediator of that New Covenant of which baptism is the sign, — be glory for ever and ever! Amen. .

THE END.

